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(*SUPPLEMENTARY SERIES.*)

ARISTÔTLE

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ARISTOTLE

BY

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ARISTOTLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF ARISTOTLE.

THE dates of the chief events in the life of Aristotle, extracted from the 'Chronology' of Apollodorus (140 B.C.), have been handed down to us by Diogenes Laertius in his 'Lives of the Philosophers;' and from various other sources it is possible to fill in the outline thus afforded, if not with certain facts, at all events with reasonable probabilities. Aristotle's own writings are almost entirely devoid of personal references, yet in them we can trace, to some extent, the progress and development of his mind. On the whole, we know quite as much about him, personally, as about most of the ancient Greek writers.

Aristotle was born in the year 384 B.C., at Stageira, a Grecian colony and seaport town on the Strymonic Gulf in Thrace, not far from Mount Athos — and, what is more important, not far from the frontier of Macedonia, and from Pella, the residence of the Macedonian

King Amyntas. To Stagira, his birthplace, he owed the world famous appellation of "the Stagiritis," given to him by scholars and scholars in later days. It was fancied by Wilhelm von Humboldt that Aristotle exhibits certain un-Greek characteristics in his neglect of form and grace in writing, and that this is attributable to his having been born and brought up in Thracæ. But, on the other hand, Aristotle's family were purely Hellenic, and probably the colonists of Stagira lived in strict conformity with Greek ideas, and not without contempt for the surrounding "barbarians." Even the court of Macedonia, in the neighbourhood, were phil-Hellenic in their tastes, and entertained Greek artists and men of letters. And Aristotle shows no trace in his writings of ever having known any language beside Greek. Probably the mere locality of his birth produced but little influence upon him, except so far as it led to his subsequent connection with the court of Macedon. His father, Nicomachus, was physician to King Amyntas, and it is possible that the youthful Aristotle was taken at times to the court, and thus made the acquaintance of his future patron, Philip of Macedon, who was about his own age. But all through the time of Aristotle's boyhood, affairs in Macedonia were troubled and unprosperous. Amyntas was an unsuccessful ruler, and brought his country to the verge of extinction in a war with the Illyrians. Aristotle, as a youth, cannot have had any inducement to take an interest in Macedonian politics. Up to the time when he left his native city, there had appeared no indication of that which afterwards occurred,—that

Macedonia would conquer the East, and become the mistress of the entire liberties of Greece.

But there is one significant tradition about Aristotle which suggests circumstances likely to have produced in early life a considerable influence upon his habits and pursuits. His father is said to have been an "Asclepiad,"—that is, he belonged to that distinguished caste who claimed to be the descendants of Esculapius. Now we have it, on the authority of Galen,* that "it was the custom in Asclepiad families for the boys to be trained by their father in the practice of dissection, just as regularly as boys in other families learn to read and write." If Aristotle had really been trained from boyhood in the manner thus described, we can understand how great an impulse he would have received to those physiological researches which formed so important a part of his subsequent achievements. But in one place of his writings ('*On the Parts of Animals*,' I v. 7), he speaks of the "extreme repugnance" with which one necessarily sees "veins, and flesh, and other suchlike parts," in the human subject. This does not show the hardihood of a practised dissector. But Aristotle's youthful dissections, if made at all, were doubtless made on the lower animals. At all events, we may perhaps safely conclude about him, that he received from his father an hereditary tendency towards physiological study. But in addition to this tendency, Aristotle must doubtless have early manifested an interest in, and capacity for, abstract philosophy.

We now come to the second epoch in his life. About

* Quoted by Grote, '*Aristotle*,' i. 4.

the year 367 B.C., when he was seventeen years old, his father having recently died, he was sent by his guardian, Proxenus of Athens, to complete his studies at Athens, "the metropolis of wisdom." * There he continued to reside for twenty years, during the greater part of which time he attended the school of philosophy which Plato had founded in the olive groves of Acadamus, on the banks of the Cephissus. He had probably inherited from his father means sufficient for his support, so that he could live without care for the acquisition of anything save knowledge. But in the acquisition of this he manifested a zeal unsurpassed in the annals of study. Among his fellow pupils in the Academy, he is said to have got the *sobriquet* of "the Reader;" while Plato himself called him "the Mind of the School," in recognition of his quick and powerful intelligence. In order to win time, even from sleep, Aristotle is said to have invented the plan of sleeping with a ball in his hand, so held over a broken dish, that whenever his grasp relaxed the ball would descend with a clang, and arouse him to the resumption of his labours.

Plato's philosophy was absolutely preeminent in Greece at this time. It embodied within itself all that was best in the doctrine and the spirit of Socrates, and beyond it there was nothing, except the mystical theories of the Pythagoreans (the best elements in which Plato had assimilated), and the materialistic theories of the Atomists, which Plato, and afterwards Aristotle, controverted. The writings of Aristotle are quite consistent with the tradition that he was for twenty years

* Plato, 'Protagoras,' p. 337. Professor Jowett's translation.

a pupil of the Academic school. They show a long list of thoughts and expressions borrowed from the works of Plato, and also not unfrequently refer to the oral teaching of Plato. They contain a logical, ethical, political, and metaphysical philosophy, which is evidently, with some modifications, the organisation and development of rich materials often rather suggested than worked out in the Platonic dialogues. Aristotle thus, in constructing a system of knowledge which was destined immensely to influence the thoughts of mankind, became, in the first place, the disciple of Plato and the intellectual heir of Socrates; and summed up all the best that had been arrived at by the previous philosophers of Greece.

The personal relationships which arose between Aristotle and his master Plato have furnished matter for uncertain traditions and for much discussion. There seems, however, to be no ground for sustaining the charge of "ingratitude" against Aristotle. The truth was probably somewhat as follows: Aristotle, while engaged in imbibing deeply the philosophical thoughts of Plato, gradually developed also his own individuality and independence of mind. And the natural bias of his intellect was certainly in a different direction from that of Plato. It has been said that "every man is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian;" and it would be very fortunate if that were literally true, for then every man would be born with a noble type of intellect. But it is no doubt correct to say that the Platonic and the Aristotelian type of intellect are distinct and divergent. They have in common the keen and unwearied

pressure after truth, but they seek the truth under different aspects. Plato was ever aspiring to intuitions of a truth which in this world could never be wholly revealed, — a truth of which glimpses only could be obtained, partly by the most abstract powers of thought, partly by the imagination. While richly endowed with humour and the dramatic faculty, and the most trenchant insight into the fallacies of mankind, Plato was not content with aiming at these demonstrations which could be stated once for all, but he rather sought analogies and hints of a truth which can never be definitely expressed. Eternity, the life of the gods, the suprasensible world of “pure ideas,” were of more reality and importance to him than the affairs of this life. While he was the greatest and most original of metaphysical philosophers, he never ceased to be a poet, and, to some extent, a mystic.

The intellectual characteristics of Aristotle, as known to us from his works, present a great contrast to all this. He was too much in earnest, and at the same time too matter of fact, to allow poetry and the imagination any share in the quest for truth. He had no taste for half lights; and with regard to such great questions as the immortality of the soul, the nature of God, the operation of Providence, and the like, it is evident that so far from preferring these, he rather kept aloof from them, and only gave cautious and grudging utterances upon them. His passion was for definite knowledge, especially knowledge so methodised that it could be stated in the form of a general principle, or law. He thought that to obtain a general principle in which

knowledge was summed up, on any subject, was of the utmost importance ; * that such a principle was a possession for all future time, that future generations would apply to it and work it out in detail, and thus that it would form the nucleus of a science. And this was the daring aim of Aristotle —no less than the foundation of all the sciences. We shall have occasion to point out subsequently the imperfections of Aristotle's method in physical science when compared with that of modern times. But for all that, his spirit was essentially scientific, and for the sake of science and the naked truth he discarded all beauty and grace of style. Plato on the other hand was an artist, and clothed all his thoughts in beauty ; and if there be (as there surely is) † a truth which is above the truth of scientific knowledge, that was the truth after which Plato aspired. Aristotle's aspirations were for methodised experience and the definite.

It is easy to understand, or imagine, how two great minds with such divergent tendencies would be unable to continue for ever to stand to each other in the relation of pupil to teacher. For a time, no doubt, the divergence would not be discovered. Aristotle at first would appear only as "the mind" of Plato's school. And his first attempts at philosophical writing appear to have been made in the form of dialogues in somewhat feeble imitation of the masterpieces of Plato. We shall speak hereafter of this early and lighter class of Aristotle's writings. He may have adhered for

* See *Soph. Elench.* xxxii. 13 ; *'Eth.'* I. vii. 17-21.

† See Lotze's *'Microcosmus,'* *Einleitung.*

several years to this mode of composition. But all the while his powers, his knowledge, and his methods of thought were maturing, and he was working his way to the conception of a quite different mode of setting forth philosophy. Gradually, as he grasped, or thought he had grasped, all that Plato had to impart, his mind would tend to dwell more on those aspects of Plato's thought with which he did not sympathise. He would especially feel a sort of impatience at the licence allowed to the imagination to intrude itself into the treatment of philosophic questions,—at the substitution of gorgeous myths and symbolical figures for plain exact answers of the understanding. This feeling of impatience broke out in a polemic against that doctrine of the eternal “Ideas” or Forms of Things, which appears somewhat variously set forth in Plato's dialogues, especially in ‘*Timæus*,’ ‘*Phædrus*,’ and ‘*Republic*,’ and which doubtless formed a prominent topic in Plato's discourses to his school. We are told by Proclus * that Aristotle “proclaimed loudly in his dialogues that he was unable to sympathise with the doctrine of Ideas, even though his opposition to it should be attributed to a factious spirit.” The import of that doctrine was to disparage the world of sensible objects. It represented that when we, by means of our senses, apprehend, or think that we apprehend, particular objects, we are like men sitting in a dimly-lighted subterraneous cavern, and staring at shadows on the wall; that the world of sense is a world of shadows, but that a true world exists,—a world of Ideas; that

* Quoted by Philoponus, ii. 2.

nothing is really good or beautiful in the world of sense, but what we call good or beautiful things are those which have a faint semblance to the Idea of the good or the beautiful, and thus bring back to our souls the remembrance of those Ideas, which we once saw in our ante-natal condition ; that the Ideas or Forms are archetypes, in accordance with which the Creator framed this world ; that they are not only the cause of qualities and attributes in things, such as goodness, justice, equality, and the like, but also they are heads of classes or universals, and that they alone have complete reality, while the individuals, constituting the classes at the head of which they stand, only “participate” to a certain extent in real existence. Such were some of the features of Plato’s celebrated doctrine of Ideas. That he did not himself hold very strongly or dogmatically to its details, may be judged from the fact that in two of his dialogues (‘*Parmenides*’ and ‘*Sophist*’) he himself points out, and does not remove, many difficulties which attach to them. But the main gist of the doctrine was to assert what is called Realism ; and this, under one form or another, Plato always maintained. When Aristotle attacked the doctrine of Ideas, there was the first beginning of that controversy between the Realists and the Nominalists, which so much excited the minds of men in the middle ages. Realism, making reason independent of the senses, asserts that the universal is more real than the particular, — that, for instance, the universal idea of “man” in general is more real, and can be grasped by the mind with greater certainty, than the concep-

tion of any individual man. Nominalism, on the contrary, asserts the superior reality of individual objects, and turns the universal into a mere name. Now it was quite natural for Aristotle, with his tendency towards physical science and experiment, and the amassing of particular facts, to take the Nominalist view, so far as to assert the reality of individual objects. But there is reason for doubting that he ever became a thorough and consistent Nominalist. For the present it is sufficient to note that at the outset of his philosophical career he appears to have made an onslaught, in several dialogues which he wrote for the purpose, on Plato's doctrine of Ideas. In three passages of his extant works ('Euth.' I. vi.; 'Met.' I. vi., XII. iv.), he gives summaries of his arguments on the subject. He couches these arguments in courteous language, and in one place introduces them with words which have been Latinised into the well-known phrase—*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas*. Yet the arguments themselves appear somewhat captious. And there may have been a youthful vehemence in the mode in which he first urged them. Here probably first appeared "the little rift within the lute;" this was the beginning of that divergence of mind and attitude which, growing wider, rendered it ultimately impossible that Aristotle should be chosen to succeed Plato, as inheritor of his method, and head of the Academic school.

In another set of circumstances, tradition affords us indications of the independence and self-confidence of Aristotle having been manifested during the lifetime of

Plato. In his extant writings, Plato speaks so disparagingly of the art of Rhetoric, that we can hardly fancy his giving any encouragement to the study of it among his disciples. But none the less Aristotle appears to have diligently laboured in this, as in every other intellectual province that he found open. Plato would not separate Rhetoric from the rhetorical spirit; he regarded the whole thing as a procedure for tickling the ears, for flattering crowds, for subordinating truth to effect. Aristotle, in the analytical way which became one of his chief characteristics, separated the method of Rhetoric from the uses to which it might be applied. He saw that success in Rhetoric depended on general principles and laws of the human mind, and that it would be worth while to draw these out and frame them into a science, especially as many of his countrymen had already essayed to do the same, though imperfectly. He maintained that the study of the methods of Rhetoric was desirable and even necessary to a free citizen, for self-defence, for the exposure of sophistry, and in the interests of truth itself. Now, the greatest school of Rhetoric in all Greece was at this period held in Athens by the renowned Isocrates, who, when Aristotle arrived at Athens, was at the zenith of his reputation. He was now nearly seventy years old, but continued to teach and to compose with almost unabated vigour for twenty-eight years more. Isocrates had been the follower of Socrates, and several leading Sophists of the latter part of the fifth century B.C. Protagoras, Prodicus, Gorgias, and Theramenes—are named as having been

his teachers.* He was a dignified old man, full of the most elevated sentiments. The style of his oratory had been formed after the florid Sicilian school of Gorgias, but was more severe and artistic than the earlier models of that school. He professed to inculcate what he called "philosophy," but which was really a kind of thought standing half way between pure speculative search for truth, like that of Plato, and the merely worldly and practical aims of the Sophists. It was a manly wisdom dealing with politics and morality, analogous to the reflections on such subjects in which Cicero afterwards indulged. The rhetorical school of Isocrates drew pupils from all parts of Greece, from Sicily, and even from Pontus. In it, says Cicero, "the eloquence of all Greece was trained and perfected." The pupils remained in it sometimes three or four years; they paid a fee of 1000 drachmæ each (= 1000 francs, or £40); and thus in his long life the master became one of the most opulent citizens of Athens. "Isocrates," says Dionysius, "had the educating of the best of the youth of Greece," and so many of his scholars became afterwards distinguished in various ways—as orators, statesmen, generals, historians, or philosophers—that a list of them was drawn up by Hermippus. Among the number was Speusippus, nephew to Plato, and afterwards his successor in the headship of the Academy. And yet it may readily be believed that there was small sympathy between the Academy and the school of Isocrates,

* See Professor Jebb's 'Attic Orators from Antiphon to Isæos,' ii. 5.

the aims of the two being so very different. Plato and his followers looked down with more or less contempt on the half-philosophising of Isocrates. And at last the youthful Aristotle came forward as a champion, challenging and attacking the highly-reputed veteran. Aristotle is said to have parodied on this occasion a line of Euripides—

“What ! must I
In silence leave barbarians to speak ?
Never !”

and to have taken for his motto the words

“What ? must I
In silence leave Isocrates to speak ?”

The acrimony of the allusion suggests to us the spirit in which he opened the controversy. He seems to have assailed the matter of the discourses of Isocrates, as being of a superficial and merely oratorical character, and also his theory of the art of rhetoric, and his mode of teaching it. The strictures of Aristotle were answered by Cephisodorus, one of the pupils of Isocrates, who wrote a defence of his master in four books. Both attack and reply have completely perished. Aristotle appears to have followed up his theoretical denunciation of Isocrates by the practical step of opening a school of Rhetoric in rivalry to his. What the success of this enterprise may have been is not recorded. There is no reason for supposing that the young Stagirite at all succeeded in impressing the Athenians at that time with his superior insight into the laws of Rhetoric. The real value and scientific

pre-eminence of his views came out in the immortal treatise on Rhetoric, which many years later he composed. But it is remarkable that that treatise, while full of references to Isocrates, bears no traces of any ill-feeling towards him. In fact, it would seem that time must have worked a certain change in the character of Aristotle, for almost the only glimpses which we have of him during his earlier residence at Athens show him somewhat petulantly attacking both Plato and Isocrates; whereas his works which we possess, and which were written later, are calmly impersonal and devoid of all petulance of spirit.

Plato died in the year 347 B.C., and we find that in that year Aristotle, together with his fellow-disciple Xenocrates, left Athens, and went to reside at Atarnus, a town of Asia Minor. This migration was doubtless caused by the choice of Speusippus, Plato's nephew, to be Leader of the Academy. However natural it may have been that Aristotle should be held disqualified by incompatibility of opinions for becoming the representative of Plato, still it may have been unpleasant to him to see another preferred to himself, and especially one so inferior to himself in intellect as Speusippus. And Xenocrates may have felt something of the same kind on his own account. Accordingly, the two left Athens together. Aristotle had more than one reason for selecting Atarnus as his new place of abode. It was the home of Proxenus, his guardian, of whom mention has already been made; and it was ruled over by Hermias, an enlightened prince, with whom both Aristotle and Xenocrates had had the opportunity of

forming a philosophic friendship. The history of Hermeias was remarkable: he had been the slave of Eubulus, the former despot of Atarneus. As happens not uncommonly in the East, he had sprung from being slave to be vizier, and thence to be ruler himself. He governed beneficently; and, his mind not being devoid of philosophical impulses, he had come to Athens and attended the lectures of Plato. He now hospitably received the two emigrants from Plato's school, and entertained them at his court for three years, during which time he bestowed the hand of Pythias, his niece, upon Aristotle in marriage. This may be conceived to have been a happy period of Aristotle's life, but it was cut short by the death of his benefactor, who was treacherously kidnapped by a Greek officer in the service of the Persians, and put to death. Aristotle afterwards recorded his admiration for Hermeias, in a hymn or psalm which he wrote in his honour, and in which he likened him to Hercules and the Dioscuri, and other heroes of noble endurance. He also perhaps alludes to him in a well-known passage* in which he says that "a good man does not become a friend to one who is in a superior station to himself, unless that superiority of station be justified by superiority of merit." If Aristotle had Hermeias, his own former friend, in his mind when he wrote this passage, he must have generously attributed to him moral qualities superior to his own.

On flying from Atarneus, as they were now obliged to do, Xenocrates returned to Athens, and Aristotle

* 'Ethics,' VIII. vi. 6.

took up his abode with his wife at Mitylenæ, where he lived two or three years, until he was invited by Philip of Macedon to become the tutor of Alexander, then a boy of the age of thirteen. That Aristotle, the prince of philosophers and supreme master of the sphere of knowledge, should be called upon to train the mind of Alexander, the conqueror of the world, seems a combination so romantic, that it has come to be thought that it must have been the mere assumption of some sophist or rhetorician. This, however, is an unnecessary scepticism, for antiquity is unanimous in accepting the tradition, and there are no circumstances that we know of which are inconsistent with it. Aristotle's family connection with the royal family of Macedon made it natural that now, when he had acquired a certain reputation in Greece, he should be offered this charge. Unfortunately no information has been handed down to us as to the way in which he performed its duties. History is silent on the subject, and we cannot even gather from any of Aristotle's own writings his views as to the education of a prince; the treatise on education, which was to have formed part of his 'Politics,' has reached us as an incomplete or mutilated fragment. Nothing that is recorded of Alexander tends to throw any light on his early training, except, perhaps, his interest in Homer and in the Attic tragedians, and his power of addressing audiences in Greek, which was, of course, to a Macedonian an acquired language. It is reasonable to suppose that Aristotle instructed him in rhetoric, and imbued him with Greek literature, and took him through a course of mathe-

matics. Whether he attempted anything beyond this "secondary instruction" we know not. But it would be vain to look for traces of a personal and intellectual influence having been produced by the teacher on the mind of his pupil. Alexander's was a genius of that first-rate order that grows independently of, or soon outgrows, all education. His mind was not framed to be greatly interested in science or philosophy; he was, as the First Napoleon said of himself, *tout à fait un être politique*; and even during part of the period of Aristotle's tutelage, he was associated with his father in the business of the State. On the whole, we might almost imagine that Aristotle's functions at the court of Macedonia were light, and that he was allowed considerable leisure for the quiet prosecution of his own great undertakings. He seems, however, to have enjoyed the full confidence and favour of his patrons,* and to have retained his appointment altogether about five years, until Philip was assassinated in the year 336 B.C., and Alexander became King of Macedonia.

For a year after the death of Philip, Aristotle still remained, residing either at Pella or at Stageira; but of course no longer as preceptor to Alexander, whose mind was now totally absorbed by imperial business and plans for the subjugation of all the peoples of the

* Aristotle at this time obtained the permission of Philip to rebuild and resettle his native city, Stageira, which had been sacked and ruined in the Olynthian war (349-347 B.C.) He collected the citizens, who had been scattered abroad, invited new comers, and made laws for the community. In memory of these services an annual festival was afterwards held in his honour at Stageira.

East, —while his own mind was meditating plans different in kind, but no less vast, for the subjugation of all the various realms of knowledge. In 335 B.C., the preparations for Alexander's oriental campaigns were commenced in earnest, and Aristotle then again betook himself, after a twelve years' absence, to Athens, whither he returned with all the prestige which could be derived from the most marked indications of the favour of Alexander, who ordered a statue of him to be set up at Athens, and who is said also to have furnished him with ample funds for the prosecution of physical and zoological investigations. Athenæus computes the total sum given to Aristotle in that way at 800 talents (nearly £200,000); and, if this had been the actual fact, it would have been, perhaps, the greatest instance on record of the "endowment of research." But we can only treat the statement as at best mere hearsay. We know how amounts of this kind are invariably exaggerated; and, indeed, the whole story may have arisen from the imagination of later Greek writers dwelling on the relationship between the philosopher and the king. The same may be said of Pliny's assertion, that "thousands of men" in Alexander's army were put at the orders of Aristotle for the purposes of scientific inquiry and collection. Had this been true, Aristotle, though far from being able to make the use which now would be made of such an opportunity, would have been in a position which many a biologist of the present day might envy. Even discounting all such statements as uncertain and questionable, we must still admit that Aristotle, in his 50th

year, was enabled, under the most favourable auspices, to commence building up the great fabric of philosophy and science for which he had been, all his life long, making the plans and gathering the materials.

Aristotle, on his return, found Speusippus dead, and Xenocrates installed as leader of the Platonic school of Philosophy, which was held, as we have said, in the groves of Academe, on the west of the city of Athens. He immediately opened a rival school on the eastern side, in the grounds attached to the Temple of the Lyceian Apollo. From his using the covered walks (*peripatoi*) in these grounds for lecturing to, and intercourse with, his pupils, the name of "Peripatetics" came to be given to his scholars, and to the Aristotelian sect in general. His object being research, and the bringing into methodised form the results of investigations,—it may be asked why he should have opened a school? Partly, this was necessitated by a regard for his own reputation and fame, —it was a method of publication suitable before the days of printing. And also in many ways it could be made to further his views. Teaching a philosophical school was a very different thing from teaching the rudiments. It was more like the work of a German professor, who often does not condescend to impart anything to his class, except his own latest discoveries. The very practice of imparting to an auditory reasoned-out conclusions is a stimulus to their production, and at the same time a test of their correctness. Thus, Aristotle, in his writings, frequently uses the term "teaching" merely to indicate "demonstration;" and as there is reason to

believe that all his great works were written at this time, we may conceive, with great likelihood, that all the "demonstrations" they contain had at one time the form of "teachings"—that is to say, that they went through the process of being read to his school. But there was another special way in which Aristotle was able not only to benefit his scholars, but also to make use of them as subordinate labourers in his work. We must remember what he was aiming at: it was to produce what we should call an *encyclopædia* of all the sciences. Such a book, nowadays, is done by many different hands, and the different articles in it do not aim at being original, but at compiling the latest results of the best authorities in each department. But Aristotle sought to construct an *encyclopædia* with his own hand, in which each science should appear brand-new, originally created or quite reconstructed by himself. He began from the very beginning, and framed his own philosophical or scientific nomenclature; he traced out the laws on which human reasoning proceeds and was the first to reduce these to science, and to produce a *Logic*. He wrote anew '*Metaphysics*,' '*Ethics*,' '*Politics*,' '*Rhetoric*,' and '*The Art of Poetry*;' and while these were still on the stocks, he was engaged in founding, on the largest scale, the physical and natural sciences, especially natural philosophy, physiology under various aspects (such as histology and anatomy, embryology, psychology, the philosophy of the senses, &c.), and, above all, natural history. Much of this work, especially its more abstract part, was the slowly-ripened fruit of his entire previous life. Bu

though he had great stores ready that only required to be arranged and put forth, he never ceased pushing out inquiries in all directions, and collecting fresh materials. He had quite the Baconian zeal for *experientia tabulata*, for lists and memoranda of all kinds of facts, historical, political, psychological, or naturalistic. He loved to note problems to be solved and difficulties to be answered. Thus a boundless field of subordinate labour was opened, in which his pupils might be employed. The absence of any effort after artistic beauty in his writings made it easier to incorporate here and there the contributions of his apprentices. And his works, as we have them, exhibit some traces of co-operative work. The Peripatetic school, after his death, followed the direction which Aristotle had given them, and were noted for their monographs on small particular points.

Aristotle was not a citizen of Athens, but only a "metic," or foreign resident, so he took no part in public affairs. His whole time during the thirteen years of his second residence in the city—a period coeval with the astonishing career of Alexander in the East—must have been devoted to labours within his school, especially in connection with the composition of his works. From the enthusiastic passages in which he speaks of the joys of the philosopher, we may conceive how highly the privileges of this period—so calm and yet so intensely active—were appreciated by him. But few traditions bearing upon this part of his life have been handed down. These chiefly point to his relations with Alexander, with whom, as well as with

Antipater, who was acting as viceroy in Macedonia, he is represented as having maintained a friendly correspondence. Cassander, the son of Antipater, appears to have attended his school. As time went on, the character of Alexander became corrupted* by unchecked success, Asiatic influences, and the all but universal servility which he encountered. His mind became alienated from those Greek citizens around him who showed any independence of spirit. He quarrelled with Antipater, who was faithfully acting for him at home. On a frivolous charge he cruelly put to death Callisthenes, a young orator whom, on the recommendation of Aristotle, he had taken in his retinue. On this and other occasions he is said to have broken out into bitter expressions against "the sophistries" of Aristotle, — that is to say, his free and reasonable political principles. The East, conquered physically by Alexander, had conquered and changed the mind of its conqueror. And he had now fallen quite out of sympathy with his ancient preceptor and friend. But the Athenians seem to have been unconscious of any such change. Aristotle had come to Athens as the avowed favourite and *protégé* of Alexander, and that, too, at a moment when Alexander (335 B.C.), by sacking the city of Thebes, and by compelling Athens with the threat of a similar fate to exile some of her anti-Macedonian statesmen, had made himself the object of sullen dread and covert dislike to the majority of the Athenian citizens. Some portion of this feeling was doubtless reflected upon Aristotle, but during the life of Alexander

* See Grote's 'History of Greece,' xii. 291, 301, 341.

any manifestation of it was checked, the affairs of Athens being administered for the time by the "Macedonian" party. Of this party Aristotle was naturally regarded as a pronounced adherent, and he came even to be identified with those arbitrary and tyrannical acts of Alexander, which must in reality have been most repugnant to him. This was especially the case in 324 B.C., when Alexander thought fit to insult the Hellenic cities, by sending a proclamation to be read by a herald at the Olympic Games, ordering them to recall all citizens who were under sentence of banishment, and threatening with instant invasion any city which should hesitate to obey this command. The officer charged with bearing this offensive proclamation, so galling to the self-respect of the Grecian communities, turned out to be none other than Nicanor of Stageira, son of Proxenus the guardian of Aristotle, and now the ward and destined son-in-law of Aristotle himself. This unfortunate circumstance could not fail to draw upon the philosopher, without any fault of his own, the animosity of the Athenian people. In the summer of the next year (323 B.C.), the eyes of all Greece were still anxiously fixed upon the movements of Alexander, when of a sudden the startling news thrilled through every city that the life of the great conqueror had been cut short by a violent fever at Babylon. The news caused a sensation throughout the states of Greece analogous to what would have been felt throughout Europe had Napoleon been suddenly cut off, say in the year 1810.

By the death of Alexander the position of Aristotle

at Athens was profoundly affected. The anti-Macedonian party at once, for the moment, regained power; the statesmen who had hitherto protected him were forced to fly from the city, and the spirit of reaction included him also in its attacks. It now became clear that Aristotle had a host of enemies in Athens. There were three classes of persons from whom especially these hostile ranks would naturally be recruited: 1st, The numerous friends of the orator Isocrates, with whom Aristotle in earlier life had put himself in competition; 2d, The Platonists, who resented Aristotle's divergence from their master and his polemic against certain points of the Platonic system; 3d, The anti-Macedonian party, who indiscriminately visited on Aristotle the political acts of Alexander. Feelings that had been long repressed and kept unexpressed, while Aristotle was strong in political support, were now licensed by the changed circumstances to come forth into act. His enemies seized on the moment to do him a mischief. An indictment, charging him with "impiety," was drawn up by Erastmedon, the chief priest of the Eleusinian Ceres, aided by a son of Ephorus, the historian, who had been one of the pupils of Isocrates. Matter for this accusation was obtained partly from Aristotle's poem written in honour of Heracles, and which equaled him to the demi-gods, partly from the fact that Aristotle had placed a statue of Heracles in the temple at Delphi, partly also from some passages in his published writings which were pointed to as inconsistent with the national religion. A philosopher's view must necessarily differ from the

popular view of the topics of religion. Yet in his extant works Aristotle is always tender and reverent in dealing with popular beliefs; indeed, in modern times, these works have been regarded as a bulwark of ecclesiastical feeling. The whole charge, if taken on its real merits, must be considered utterly frivolous; yet those who would have to try the case—a large jury taken from the general mass of the citizens—could not be depended on for discrimination in such a question. They would be too subject to the currents of envy, political, personal, and anti-philosophical, setting in from various quarters; they would be too readily imbued with the *odium theologium*. Nothing but a very general popularity would have been an effectual protection at such a moment, and this it is not likely that Aristotle ever possessed in Athens. While capable of devoted and generous friendship, he may easily have been cold and reserved towards general society. He was absorbed in study, and probably lived confined within the narrow scientific circle of his own school. He may even have exhibited some of those proud characteristics which he attributes in his ‘Ethics’ to the “great souled” man, “who claims great things for himself because he is worthy of them,” and “who cannot bear to associate with any one except a friend.” However this may have been, he was probably right on the present occasion to decline submitting his life and opinions to the judgment of the populace of Athens. He availed himself of the law which gave to any accused person the option of quitting the city before the day of trial, and he retired to Chalcis in Eubœa,

“in order,” as he is reported to have said, “that the Athenians might not have anther opportunity of sinning against philosophy, as they had already done once in the person of Socrates.”

Chalcis was the original home of the ancestry of Aristotle, and he appears to have had some property there; but it was especially a safe place of refuge for him, as being occupied at this time by a Macedonian garrison. He probably intended only to make a short sojourn there, till circumstances should be changed. He must have fully foreseen that in a short space of time the Macedonian arms would prevail, and restore at Athens the government which had hitherto protected him. He left his school and library in charge of Theophrastus, doubtless looking forward to a speedy return to them, and to the resumption of those labours which had already consummated so much. And all this would have happened but that, within a year's time, in 322 B.C., he was seized with illness, and died somewhat suddenly at Chalcis, in the sixty third year of his age. The story that he had taken poison may be dismissed as fabulous. A more trustworthy account speaks of his having suffered from impaired digestion, the natural result of his habits of application, and this may very likely have been the cause of his death.

The will of Aristotle, or what professes to be such, has been preserved amongst a heap of very questionable tradition, by Diogenes Laertius. If not genuine it is cleverly invented, and is the work of a romancer who wished to credit the Stagirite with evidences of a generous and just disposition. The property to be dis-

posed of seems considerable, analogous perhaps to an estate of £50,000 in the present day. The chief beneficiary under the will is Nicanor (before mentioned), whom Aristotle appoints to marry Pythias, — his daughter by the niece of Hermeias, — so soon as she shall be of marriageable age. Aristotle's first wife had died, and he had subsequently married Herpyllis of Stageira, who became the mother of his son Nicomachus. The will places Nicomachus under the care of Nicanor, and makes liberal provision for Herpyllis, who is mentioned in terms of affection and gratitude. Several of the slaves are thought of, and are to be presented with money and set at liberty; all the young slaves are to be freed, "if they deserve it," as soon as they are grown up. Nicanor is charged to transfer the bones of Aristotle's first wife Pythias to his own place of interment, to provide and dedicate suitable busts of various members of Aristotle's family, and to fulfil a vow formerly made by himself of four marble figures of animals to Zeus the Preserver and Athene the Preserver. This last clause throws suspicion on the genuineness of the document, for it looks like a mere imitation of the dying injunction of Socrates: "We owe a cock to Æsculapius; pay the debt and do not fail." Other points also suggest doubt: for instance, Antipater is named as chief executor, and this detail has the appearance of being the work of a forger availing himself of a well-known name; again, there is a difficulty about Pythias the daughter of Aristotle being too young for marriage at the time of her father's death,—he had married her mother some twenty-three

years previously, and had been subsequently married. The terms of the will would imply that Nicomachus was a mere child when his father died, which is inconsistent with other considerations. These and other points of criticism which might be urged do not absolutely prove the will to have been a forgery, they only leave us in doubt about it. And, as has been said, even if regarded as a mere fabrication, it is still a tribute of antiquity to the virtue of Aristotle.

On the other hand, this great name did not escape without incurring its full share of carping and detraction. And the gossip-mongers of the later Roman empire, including Fathers of the Church, have handed on some of the hearsay reports, smart sayings of epigrammatists, and attacks of hostile schools of philosophy, which had been levelled against Aristotle. After all they come to very little:—that he had small eyes, and thin legs, and a lisping utterance; that he passed a wild and spendthrift youth; that he was showy and affected in his attire, and habitually luxurious in his table; that he chose to live at the Macedonian court for the sake of the flesh-pots to be obtained by so doing; and that he was ungrateful to Plato,—these make up the sum of the charges against him. Perhaps if we knew all the facts, we might find that a contradictory, or at all events a different, statement would be more correct under each of the several heads. As it is, we may fairly deal with these imputations as we should with similar aspersions on the personal history of any great man, if they could neither be proved nor disproved, and set them aside as beneath consideration.

We cannot expect to know more than the outline of Aristotle's life, but all we know gives us the impression of a life that, morally speaking, was singularly honourable and blameless. And it was the life of one who by his intellectual achievements placed himself at the very head of ancient thought, and won the admiration and allegiance of many centuries. What those intellectual achievements were we have now to endeavour to set forth.

CHAPTER II.

THE WORKS OF ARISTOTLE.

A CATALOGUE of the works of Aristotle has been handed down to us, which was made by the Librarian of the great Library at Alexandria about the year 220 B.C. — that is to say, a century after the death of the philosopher — and which gives the titles of all the books, contained in the Library, which were attributed to the authorship of Aristotle. These titles amount to 146 in number, but it is at first sight a most astonishing circumstance that they do not in the least answer to the writings which we now possess under the name of the “works of Aristotle.” All the books mentioned in the Alexandrian catalogue are now lost; only a few fragments of them have been preserved in the shape of extracts and quotations from them made by other writers; but everything tends to show that they were quite a different set, and different altogether in character, from the forty treatises which stand collectively on our bookshelves labelled ‘*Aristotelis Opera*.’ Under the circumstances it would be natural to conjecture that so (comparatively speaking) short a time after the death of Aristotle, the learned keepers of the Alexandrian Library

must have known what he really wrote, and therefore that in losing the books mentioned in the Alexandrian catalogue we have lost the true works of Aristotle, as they existed 100 years after his death, and that what has come down to us under his name, be it what it may, cannot be the genuine article. Other facts, however, and criticism of the whole question, show that this natural supposition is incorrect, and that something like the contradictory of it is true. It is a curious story, and needs some little explanation.

The life of Aristotle after his boyhood fell, as we have seen, into three broad divisions - namely, his first residence at Athens, from his eighteenth to his thirty-eighth year; his residence away from Athens, at Atarneus, Mitylene, Pella, and Stageira, from his thirty-eighth to his fiftieth year; and his second residence at Athens, from his fiftieth to his sixty-third year. During the first period, after studying under Plato, he commenced authorship by writing dialogues, which appear to have been published at the time. They differed from the Platonic dialogues in not being dramatic, but merely expository, like the dialogues of Bishop Berkeley, the principal *role* in each being assigned to Aristotle himself. They were somewhat rhetorical in style, and quite adapted for popular reading. In them Aristotle attacked Plato's doctrine of Ideas, and set forth views on philosophy, the chief good, the arts of government, moral virtue, and other topics. Then came the second period of his life, when he had definitely broken with the school of Plato, and was away from all the schools of Athens, enjoying much

leisure and positions of dignity. In this period it is probable that he not only prosecuted his researches and independent speculations in many branches of thought and science, but that he learned to know his own mission in the world, which was to stick to the matter of knowledge, abandoning all regard for the artistic adornment of truth. During this period we may believe that he thoroughly developed the individual character of his own mind in relation to philosophy, so that when he came back to Athens he had quite established his own peculiar style of writing, crabbed, indeed and inelegant, but full of an exact phraseology which he had himself constructed, and on the whole not unsuited as a vehicle for the exposition of science. We are not able, however, to say for certain whether in his second period he actually composed any works, though he must constantly have been compiling notes and memoranda, to serve either as the materials or the ground-plans for future treatises. The third period of Aristotle's life was the rich fruit-time of his genius. We have already mentioned how he set himself to the construction of an entire encyclopædia of science and philosophy. What we possess as his works contain the unfinished, but much advanced, working out of that project. There is every reason to believe that the great bulk of this series of writings was composed by Aristotle during the last thirteen years of his life. He was doubtless assisted by his school, and he must have had many treatises on hand at one time, or rather he had them all in his head, and when anything caused him to drop one for a time he could go on with an-

ther. Hardly any of the treatises are finished, still less is there any trace of careful revision and "the last hand." It is certain that many of these works were never published during Aristotle's lifetime, and it is even a question whether any of them were so published.

When Aristotle died, all the MSS of his later compositions, together with the considerable library of other men's writings which he had got together, were under charge of his chief disciple Theophrastus at the school in the Lyceum. After his decease, the Peripatetics appear to have worked to some extent at editing the uncompleted treatises, and at patching together those which existed as yet only in disjointed fragments. But there does not seem to have been any multiplication of copies, or what we should call "publication." On the death of Theophrastus (which took place thirty-five years later than that of Aristotle), the whole Peripatetic school library went by his bequest to a favourite pupil named Neleus, who took all the rolls away with him to his home at a place called Scepsis, in the Troad. Included among them were the MSS, many of them unique, of Aristotle's most important works, which were thus removed from Europe. Not only was this the case, but a few years later the kings of Pergamus began seizing the books of private individuals in order to fill their own royal library, and the family of Neleus, afraid of losing the treasures they possessed, which, however, they could little appreciate, hid away the Peripatetic rolls and the precious MSS of Aristotle in a subterranean vault,

where they remained for 150 years forgotten by the world. At the end of that interval, the dynasty of the kings of Pergamum having passed away, the books were brought out of their hiding-place and sold to one Apellicon, a wealthy Peripatetic and book-collector, who resided at Athens. They were said to have been by this time a good deal damaged by worms and damp; yet still it was a great thing that, after 187 years' absence, the best productions of Aristotle should be restored, about 100 B.C., to the West.

The termination of this "strange eventful history" was that in 86 B.C. Athens was taken by Sylla, and the library of Apellicon was seized and brought to Rome, where it was placed under the custody of a librarian, and several literary Greeks, resident in Rome, had access to it. Tyrannion, the learned friend of Cicero, got permission to arrange the MSS. and Andronicus of Rhodes, applying himself with earnestness to the task of obtaining a correct text and furnishing a complete edition of the philosophical works of Aristotle, arranged the different treatises and scattered fragments under their proper heads, and getting numerous transcripts made, gave publicity to a generally received text of Aristotle. There seems to be good reason for believing that "*Our Aristotle*," as Grote calls it, in contradistinction to the Aristotle of the Alexandrian Library, is none other than this revision of Andronicus. And this being the case, we may well reflect how great was the risk which these works incurred of being consigned to perpetual oblivion. A few more years in the cellar at Scepsis, or any one of a hundred

other accidents which might have prevented these writings from getting into the appreciative and competent hands of Tyrannion and Andronicus, would in all probability have made them as if they had never been. And thus that which was actually the chief intellectual food of men in the middle ages would have been withheld. Whether for better or worse, men's thoughts would have had a different exercise and taken a different direction. Much of ecclesiastical history would have been changed. And many of the modes in which we habitually think and speak at the present day would have been different from what they are.

But we must return to the Alexandrian catalogue. If the MSS of all Aristotle's most important works were carried off in the year 287 B.C., to be buried in Asia Minor for a century and a half, what means this list of 146 books bearing the name of Aristotle, which in 220 B.C. were stored up in the Alexandrian Library? Were these also all really written by Aristotle? Was he so voluminous a composer, as this would imply, as well as a profound thinker and an original explorer of nature in many departments? Or were the books supplied to the Alexandrian collection, as the works of Aristotle, mere forgeries, got up for the market, to supply the place of the genuine writings, which for the time had been lost to the world? The only answer that can be given to these questions must be a conjectural one, and probability seems to dictate an answer lying between the two extreme hypotheses. Several of the names appearing in the catalogue remind us of the

titles of Plato's dialogues,—for instance 'Nearchus,' 'Gryllus; or, On Rhetoric,' 'Sophist,' 'Menexenus,' 'Symposium,' 'The Lover,' 'Alexander; or, On Colonies,' &c. And the natural supposition is that these books, or some of them, were none other than those early dialogues which Aristotle composed during his first residence in Athens. Strabo says distinctly that when, by the bequest of Theophrastus, the Aristotelian MSS were taken away, the Peripatetic school had none of his works left except a few of the more popular ones. His dialogues had been published, and were available, and no doubt copies of them formed the nucleus of the books professing to be his in the Alexandrian Library. Others of the collection may have been excerpts from his greater works which had been made by his scholars, and were so kept before the world when the entire works themselves were hidden in Asia Minor. Many others were probably monographs and papers by members of the Peripatetic school, drawn up in Aristotle's manner, perhaps containing his ideas, and from a sort of reverential feeling attributed to him and inscribed with his name. The residue must have been forgeries pure and simple: imitations of his dialogues, and of such parts of his treatises as were known. All the books in the Alexandrian list, though they were numerous, appear to have been short, treating generally of isolated questions, and quite unlike the long methodical setting forth of entire sciences, such as we find in the writings of Aristotle that have come down to us.

The "fate of Aristotle's works" is a romantic episode

in the history of literature. But we must observe that what in the first place rendered this train of circumstances possible was the rapid decay of genius in Greece. When Aristotle died, none of his scholars was worthy to succeed him and carry on his work. His school do not seem to have appreciated what was great and valuable in his philosophy. They went off either into rhetorical sermonising on moral questions, or else into isolated inquiries, the solution of problems, or the drawing up of "papers" like those read before the Royal Society. It was perhaps a feeling of contempt for the Peripatetic school which induced Theophrastus, a generation after the death of Aristotle, to give away their whole library, including the great works of their master, to a foreign student. But for their apathy those great works would never have been left in unique copies, and ultimately exposed to such extreme peril. There must, however, have been a corresponding apathy in the external public, else curiosity would have demanded, and the love of science would have preserved, the results of Aristotle's later years. But the reading world of the third century B.C. seems to have been quite content to be put off with that which was really un-Aristotelian, though it bore the name of Aristotle—with immature, rhetorical dialogues, the work of his youth, or spurious imitations of that work, with excerpts, epitomes, "papers," and the sweepings of the Peripatetic school.

We may take Cicero, though living two centuries later, as a good specimen of the attitude towards Aristotle of a cultivated man of literature, not devoid of a certain taste for philosophy, of those times. Cicero

often mentions, praises, and quotes Aristotle, but it is not, "*our* Aristotle," but the Aristotle of Alexandria, the writer of dialogues. Several passages of these dialogues have been translated and preserved by Cicero, who extols the "golden flow of their language," using terms which are as far as possible from being applicable to the harsh, compressed, and difficult style of Aristotle's scientific treatises. The latter were, indeed, too difficult and too repulsive for Cicero, as is plain from the story which he himself relates: Cicero had in his Tusculan villa some of the works of Aristotle, as we at present possess them, probably copies of the recension of Andronicus; when asked by his friend Trebatius what the '*Topics*' of Aristotle were about, he advised him "for his own interest" to study the book for himself, or else to consult a certain learned rhetorician. Trebatius, however, was repelled by the obscurity of the writing, and the rhetorician, when consulted, confessed his total ignorance of Aristotle. Cicero thinks this no wonder, since even the philosophers know hardly anything about him, though they "ought to have been attracted by the incredible flow and sweetness of the diction." He then proceeds to give Trebatius a summary of the first few pages of the '*Topics*' of Aristotle, which he had apparently read up for the occasion. From facts like this, it may be concluded that in the two last centuries before the Christian era, it was only the lighter and less valuable compositions of Aristotle that were generally known and admired. His more serious and really valuable contributions to thought and knowledge were left out of

sight, ignored, and forgotten. For the moment it seemed as if the favourite dictum of Lord Bacon had come to pass—that “Time, like a river, bringing down to us things which are lighter and more inflated, lets what is more weighty and solid sink.” But the result of that concatenation of accidents which we have narrated, was completely to reverse this sentence; so that now it may be said that all the lighter part of Aristotle’s work has been swept away by the stream of Time, while only that which was weighty and solid has been suffered to remain in existence. Owing to the wealth of the Roman empire, it is likely that numerous copies were made of the entire works of Aristotle, as edited by Andronicus—both for public libraries and for individuals. This gave him a better chance of survival in a collective form during the wreck and destruction of the barbarian invasions; and afterwards he was early taken into the protection of the Church. The dialogues, in the meantime, and other shorter productions, which had figured in the Alexandrian catalogue, had no coherence with each other, and thus were not reproduced by the copyists and librarians, as a whole. Again, they did not attract, as the greater works of Aristotle did, the attention of successive scholiasts and commentators. In short, they fell into the neglect which, comparatively speaking, they deserved, and disappeared, all but a few scattered quotations. But now we can thank the Providence of history that we possess a large portion of the best of all that Aristotle thought and wrote. We possess it, indeed, incomplete as he left it, and not only so, but

also edited and reedited, transposed occasionally, interpolated, and eked out, by the earlier Peripatetics, by Andronicus, and perhaps by subsequent hands. Yet still the individuality of the *Stoicism* abides, and through the greater part of these remains, and in studying them we feel that we are brought into contact with his mind.

If the supposition be correct that what we now possess is substantially the edition of Andronicus, it is clear in the first place that he did not mean this to be what we should call a "complete edition of the collective works of Aristotle," else he would have included in it the dialogues that Cicero quotes, the hymn in honour of Hermias, and we know not what beside. His object appears to have been to give to the world the philosophy of Aristotle, hitherto virtually unknown, as he found it in the documents contained in the library of Apellieus. He dealt, it must be remembered, not only with that collection of rolls which had been buried in the Troad, but also with all the books which had been got together by a wealthy bibliophile. The edition of Andronicus, if it corresponds with ours, contained a body of Aristotelian science and all Aristotle's greatest works; but on the one hand it excluded his less important writings, and on the other hand it admitted work which Aristotle certainly never wrote, though they are full of his ideas. Andronicus may have doubted as to the authorship of these treatises, which modern criticism pronounces to be by later Peripatetic hands;* or he may have thought that they

* One of the doubtful treatises—the 'Rhetoric dedicated to Alexander'—is supposed to be the work of Anaximenes, a writer contemporary with Aristotle.

represented or explained Aristotle, and might advantageously be preserved as part of his system. However it came about, we find included within the Aristotelian canon a treatise ‘On the Universe,’ neatly epitomising his views, but quite later than his time; one ‘On the Motion of Animals’ of which the same may be said; two treatises on morals, the ‘Eudæmian Ethics,’ and the ‘Great Ethics,’ which are mere paraphrases of the ‘Ethics’ of Aristotle; a large book of ‘Problems,’ with their solutions, evidently of mixed authorship; a set of ‘Opuscula,’ or minor works, which belong to the class of Peripatetic monographs,—*e.g.* ‘On Colours,’ ‘On Indivisible Lines,’ ‘On Strange Stories,’ ‘Physiognomies,’ &c.; a treatise on ‘Rhetoric,’ quite different in principles from that of Aristotle’s, and only suggested to be his by a fictitious dedication to Alexander, which has been stuck on to **it**. One or two other suspicious books might be mentioned, but even if everything were deducted against which the most sceptical criticism can make objection, less than one fourth would be taken away from the entire mass which is in use to be labelled “Aristotle.” The whole works in Pecker’s octavo edition fill 3786 pages, and out of these the books, about whose genuineness any question has been raised, occupy only 925 pages. A solid residue remains, which may now be briefly characterised, merely in regard to its external form, a few remarks being added as to the chronological order in which it seems probable that Aristotle composed the various parts.

The remains of Aristotle come before us as a torso,—an incomplete and somewhat mutilated group from

antiquity. Yet they constitute a whole, and the different treatises have an organic union with each other. On the one hand, these works constitute an encyclopædia, for they contain a *summary* and reconstruction of the sciences so far as was possible in the fourth century *b.c.* But on the other hand, they are more than an encyclopædia, because they are a philosophy, in which the universe is explained from the point of view and according to the system of one individual thinker. In them thought and knowledge are mapped out in broad and lucid outlines, with the details sometimes very fully worked in, sometimes barely indicated and left to be supplied by subsequent workers. The key to their arrangement is to be sought from Aristotle himself. From him we learn that science is divided into Practical, Constructive, and Theoretical. Practical science deals with man and human action, and this branch is copiously developed by Aristotle in his *‘Ethics’* and *‘Politics.’* Constructive science treats of art and the laws by which it is to be governed. Towards this branch Aristotle has made but a brief, though valuable, contribution, in his unfinished or mutilated treatise *‘On Poetry.’* Theoretical science has three great subdivisions, Physics, Mathematics, and Theology, otherwise called First Philosophy or Metaphysics. For the section of Mathematics nothing appears done in these remains. Aristotle speaks often of Mathematics as a great and interesting science, capable of affording high mental delight; but he seems to have regarded it as something tolerably finished and settled in his own time, and therefore less requiring his attention than

other departments. Had his life been prolonged to the age attained by Plato or Alexander von Humboldt, he might possibly have undertaken the setting forth of the philosophy of Mathematics. Physics, on the other hand—that is to say, the Physical and Natural Sciences—occupy 1447 pages, or fully one half, of the writings which are undoubtedly Aristotle's. In his physical treatises one mind may be seen grappling, at first hand, with the provinces of almost all the different "Sections" of the British Association. Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Physiology, and Natural History, are all marvellously founded in these treatises, by masterly analysis and classification of existing knowledge on the different subjects, and by the arrangement of facts, or supposed facts, under leading scientific ideas. Twelve books on Metaphysics occupy about one tenth of the genuine remains of Aristotle. These books are obviously patched together out of the fragments of two or three unfinished treatises. How far this was done by the earlier Peripatetics, and how far by Andronicus, we cannot tell. But we here possess probably some of Aristotle's latest thoughts: And the name "Metaphysics," or "the things which follow after Physics," was given to these books when they were put together, after Aristotle's death, to indicate both chronological sequence in the order of composition, and also that the subject treated of lay beyond and above all physical inquiry.

In briefly grouping out the works of Aristotle, we have hitherto omitted to mention a class of writings, very important, and amounting to one-seventh of the

whole mass, and yet which do not belong to either Practical, Constructive, or Theoretic science, — which are not part of Philosophy, but treat of the method of thought and the laws of reasoning, and which thus constitute the instrument or “organ” of Philosophy — that is to say, the logical writings, which were collectively named by the Peripatetic school “the Organon” or instrument. These books stand first in modern editions of Aristotle, and, speaking generally, they appear to have been written first of all his extant works.

The chronological sequence of composition among Aristotle’s treatises is determined by critics, conjecturally and approximately, entirely on internal evidence. There are frequent references from one treatise to another, but these cannot always be relied on. Often they are mere interpolations, not having been made by the original writer, but stuck in by the meddlesomeness of some editor or copyist; in other cases they are genuine, and indicate truly the order of composition. Another piece of evidence, more strictly internal and more to be depended on, is the greater or less development of doctrine contained in the different works respectively. Aristotle in the earlier, and still more in the second period of his life, had doubtless made great preparation for the writing of all his great works. Still, as he successively took up each subject and concentrated his attention upon it, he did not fail to develop and push further his previous thought upon it. Thus, for instance, the ‘*Rhetoric*’ is full of ethical remarks and ethical doctrine, but when we come to

read the 'Ethics' we find the same ethical questions repeated and treated with far greater depth and precision; and we may reasonably conclude that the 'Ethics' was the later-written treatise of the two.

Following out indications of this kind, we arrive at the conclusion that Aristotle first took in hand the science of method, and that, of all his extant works, the 'Topics' (or Logic of Probability), were first written, all but the eighth book; next the 'Analytics' (or Logic of Demonstration); next the eighth book of the 'Topics'; next Books I. and II. of the 'Rhetoric' (which has to do with the setting forth of truth); and then the 'Sophistical Refutations' (or treatise on Fallacies), which belongs to logic, yet still has a connection with the art of rhetoric. After thus far treating of the method of knowledge and expression, Aristotle appears to have gone on to treat of the matter of knowledge, and to have commenced with the practical sciences. First he wrote his 'Ethics,' though these were not quite finished, and afterwards his 'Politics,' and then he was led on to take up constructive science, and to write his small work 'On Poetry,' after which he reverted to his 'Rhetoric,' which was a cognate subject, and added a third book to that treatise. He now proceeded, though leaving much that was unfinished behind him, to the composition of his great series of physical treatises. The first of these to be written was probably the 'Physical Discourse,' which unfolded the general notions of natural philosophy, and gave an account of what Aristotle conceived under the terms "Nature," "Motion," "Time," "Space,"

"Causation," and the like. After these *prolegomena* to physics, he went on to treat of the universe in orderly sequence, beginning with the divinest part, the circumference of the whole, or outer heaven, which, according to his views, bounded the world, being composed of ether, a substance distinct from that of the four elements. This region was the sphere of the stars; and below it, in the Aristotelian system, was the planetary sphere, with the seven planets—the sun and moon being reckoned among the number, moving in it. Both stars and planets in some to have resembled human beings, happy beings, moving in fixed orbits, and inhabiting regions free from all change and chance; and these regions formed the subject of his treatise 'On the Heavens.' Next to this he is thought to have composed his work 'On Generation and Corruption,' in order to expound those principles of physical change (dependent on the hot, the cold, the wet, and the dry), which in the higher parts of the universe had no existence. This treatise formed the transition to the sublunary sphere, immediately round the earth, in which the meteors and comets moved, and which was characterized by incessant change, and by the passing of things into and out of existence, and which became the subject of his next treatise—the 'Meteorologies.' The last book of this work brings us down to the earth itself, and indeed beneath its surface, for it discusses, in a curious theory, the formation of rocks and metals.

From this point Aristotle would seem to have started afresh with his array of physiological treatises, the first written of which may very likely have been that 'On

the *Parts of Animals*,' as containing general principles of anatomy and physiology. Next it seems probable that the work '*On the Soul*' was produced, which was a physiological account of the vital principle as manifested in plants, animals, and men. A set of Appendices, as we should now call them, on various functions connected with life in general, such as sensation, memory, sleep, dreaming, longevity, death, &c., were added by Aristotle to his work '*On the Soul*.' Afterwards, the ten books of '*Researches on Animals*,' and the five books '*On the Generation of Animals*,' together with a minor treatise '*On the Progression of Animals*,' and with a collection of '*Problems*,' which Aristotle probably kept by him, and added to from time to time, made up the series of his physical and physiological writings, so far as he lived to complete them. Treatises '*On the Physiology of Plants*,' and '*On Health and Disease*,' had been promised by him, but were never achieved. Simultaneously with some of the works now mentioned, but in idea last of his writings, and intended to be the crown of them all, the '*Metaphysics*' were probably in course of composition when the death of Aristotle occurred.

It has been generally fancied that Aristotle was a very voluminous writer, and Diogenes Laertius, in transcribing the '*Alexandrian Catalogue*,' remarks of him that "he wrote exceedingly many books." We, however, have no reason for joining in this opinion. His genuine works that have come down to us, fill altogether less than 3000 pages, and this amount in mere point of quantity is not anything unusual or sur-

prising. Even if these works were composed, as we suppose them for the most part to have been, during the last thirteen years of his life, still, so far as quantity alone is concerned, that does not imply more than the exercise of a persistent industry. Many another man besides Aristotle has written as much as 200 pages a year for thirteen years successively. Nor is it necessary to credit Aristotle with any great bulk of writings beyond what we possess. The writings of his early life, the dialogues, sketches, memoranda, and first efforts of his philosophic pen, which got to Alexandria, need not be highly estimated, even as to mass. They were probably eked out, as we have seen, by Peripatetic imitators, and were thus made to assume larger proportions. One important piece of Aristotle's labour has perished, namely, his '*Collection of the Constitutions of Greek Cities.*' This would have been of the utmost interest as contributing to our knowledge of ancient history; but it was merely a compilation of facts, and probably would not have filled more than 400 or 500 pages. On the whole, it is not for voluminousness that Aristotle is to be wondered at. The marvel begins when we come to contemplate the solid and compressed content of his writings, their vast and various scope, and the amount of original thought given through them to the world. It would have been enough for any one man's lasting reputation to have created the science of Logic, as Aristotle did; but in addition to this he wrote as a specialist, a discoverer, and an organiser, on at least a dozen other of the greatest subjects,

and on each of them he was for many centuries accepted as the one authority. Such a position it is of course impossible for any modern to attain, but it was given to the powerful mind of Aristotle to attain it, owing to the peculiar circumstances of his epoch, and to the course of succeeding history.

CHAPTER III.

THE 'ORGANON' OF ARISTOTLE.

"ORGANON," or "the instrument," was, as we have said, the name given by Aristotle's ancient editors to his collective works on Logic. And from this of course Bacon took the title of '*Novum Organum*,' or "the new instrument," for his own work, in which the principles and method of modern science were to be developed. We find the '*Organon*' of Aristotle, as it stands in our editions, to consist of six treatises, respectively entitled '*Categories*,' '*On Interpretation*,' '*First Series of Analytics*,' '*Second Series of Analytics*,' '*Topics*,' and '*Fallacies*.' The two first of these are quite short, both together filling less than 60 pages, but they have been more read and commented on, especially in the middle ages, than all the rest of Aristotle put together. Then and of scholars, who considered themselves staunch Aristotelians, and as such fought the battle of Nominalism against the Platonists, knew not a word of Aristotle beyond these two treatises. And yet, unfortunately, it is open to considerable doubt whether either of the two was actually written by Aristotle himself.

During the first periods of his life, Aristotle had

gradually forged the chief doctrines of his philosophy, and a peculiar set of terms in which they were embodied. When he came to write continuously, in his third period, he often assumed these doctrines and terms as already known, having doubtless given them considerable publicity in oral discourse, if not in essays and short treatises which have now been lost. And thus it frequently happens that we meet with terms and doctrines the meaning of which has to be gathered by implication, as it is never explicitly stated. This is the case with Aristotle's celebrated doctrine of "the Categories," to which he repeatedly refers, without ever telling us clearly what position in his system it is meant to hold. Perhaps the simplest account of this doctrine is to say that it sprang from an analysis and classification, made by Aristotle, of the things which men speak of. "Category," in Greek, meant "speaking of" something. Now, when we speak of anything, we shall find (so Aristotle implies) that we are either speaking of "a substance,"—as, for instance, of a particular man; or else that we are asserting something to be the case about something else. And what we can assert about anything else must be either (1) some "quality" it possesses; (2) its "quantity;" (3) some "relation" in which it stands; (4) the "place" of its existence; (5) the "time" of its existence; (6) its "action," or what it does; (7) its "passion," or what is done to it; (8) its "attitude;" or (9) its "habit" or dress. "Substance," and the above nine modes of speaking of it make up the list of the Ten Categories, as enumerated by Aristotle in his 'Topics' (I. 9), and also

in the little treatise which professes to treat especially of this subject.

A complete classification of the things which we can speak of must include everything that we can think of, and therefore all the world. But the "Ten Categories" of Aristotle cannot fail to strike us as a curious summary of all things in heaven and earth. Attitude and Habit, or Dress, the 9th and 10th "Categories," are so exclusively human that we are surprised to find them introduced among genera of far wider application. Some critics say that the list is both redundant in one way and deficient in another. They say that it is redundant because the whole thing might be cut down to two heads—Substance and Relation; and deficient because to none of the "Categories" could mental states and feelings be appropriately assigned. However, Aristotle might perhaps have said that they came under Quality, Action, or Passion, as the case might be. In other parts of his works he gives enumerations of the "Categories," naming 8, 6, or 4, instead of 10. In one place (*Met.* VI. iv.) he names the first five "Categories," with "Motion" added as a sixth. This last would certainly, according to his view, include the various operations of the mind. On the whole, Aristotle does not appear to have laid much stress on his table of "Categories" as containing an exhaustive division of all things. Probably at first this table was the result of a study in language, made at a time when logical and even grammatical distinctions were in their infancy. Aristotle took the idea of a particular man—say Callias—and called this "Substance," and then tried how many

different kinds of assertions could be made about him ; and when he had reduced these to 9, he was perhaps pleased, because "Substance," and the 9 kinds of assertion made about it, made up 10 "Categories," and 10 is a perfect number. He afterwards dropped this particular number, and the "Categories" which had been brought in at the end of the list to eke it out. He seems always to have thought a classification of the ways in which we speak of things to be useful for obtaining clear notions. But he was far too sensible to apply his original table of "Ten Categories" as a Procrustean bed for measuring everything in the universe. At the same time it must be confessed that it has been prevalently thought that he did so. Thus Bacon contemptuously accused him of "constructing the world out of his 'Categories.'" But this arose very much from the fact that the first book of the 'Organon' was read out of all proportion more than Aristotle's great philosophical treatises, and so it came about that the Aristotelian schoolmen attached an exaggerated importance to the table of which it treats, and their sins have been imputed to the Stagirite himself.

The little book before us, which has exercised so much influence, might be described as a logical monograph on the characteristics of some of the "Categories." After naming the ten, without any account of the manner in which they are arrived at, it discusses to a certain extent the first four only. Then some chapters are appended, which may or may not have been originally a separate paper, on the different ways in which things are called "opposite," &c. There are two or

three hypotheses possible about the book entitled 'Categories.' Either it was an early essay written by Aristotle himself, and preserved among his MSS.; or it consists of notes from his school, made by some scholar during his lifetime; or else it is the work of some Peripatetic, drawn up after his death, when the making of such tracts had become a fashion. Style is not a sufficient guide in such a question, because the Peripatetics closely imitated the manner of their master. The chief reason for thinking that this book cannot have been his is on account of the extreme nominalism of its doctrine. Aristotle in the 'Metaphysics' (VI. vii. 4) asserts that the universal is the "first substance," while the individual has a secondary and derivative existence; but it is asserted in the 'Categories' that the individual is the first substance, and that if individuals were swept away universals would cease to exist. Aristotle may have said this in the early days of his antagonism against Plato;—if so, he seems to have reverted in mature life to something more approaching, though distinguishable from, Plato's view. There are, however, unphilosophical and un-Aristotelian things in the book—as, for instance, the saying ('Cat.' vii. 21) that "if knowledge ceased to exist, the thing known might still remain." All this looks like the work of a clever but somewhat materialistic follower of the Peripatetic school.

The book which we find standing second in the 'Organon,' is the little treatise 'On Interpretation,' or, as it might be called, 'On Language as the interpreter of Thought.' Its subject is that which in Logic is called

the "proposition,"—that is to say, it treats of sentences which affirm or deny something. Modern Logic is divided into three parts, treating respectively of terms, propositions, and syllogisms; and it might for a moment be supposed that the three works, 'Categories,' 'On Interpretation,' and 'Analytics,' correspond to these three divisions. But this is only superficially the case; for the 'Categories' does not treat generally of simple terms, it only touches on some characteristics of the names of Substances, Qualities, Quantities, and Relations. And the book, 'On Interpretation' is not a prelude to the 'Analytics;' it is a separate logical monograph on some of the characteristics of propositions, containing, at the same time, some remarks on words, as fit or unfit to become terms—on indefinite words, "syn-categorematic" words, &c. The great merit of this little treatise is undeniable, especially when considered as containing matter, which though now long accepted and perfectly trite, was in a great measure new in the time of Aristotle, and which served towards the clearing up of many a confusion. All those clear statements about the nature of the proposition; on what is meant by "contrariety" and "contradiction;" on "modal propositions," or propositions in which the amount of certainty is expressed by the words "necessarily" or "probably;" and other points which the reader will find in the second part of Whately's 'Logic,' are taken almost *verbatim* from this treatise. There is one point of which Whately was especially fond—namely, that "truth" is the attribute of a proposition or assertion and of nothing else, except in a metaphori-

cal way. This comes from the work before us, where it is laid down as the first characteristic of a proposition that it must be either true or false. A distinction, however, is here drawn, for propositions admit the idea of time. Now, it is the case with regard to propositions of past and present time—for instance, “it is raining,” or “it rained yesterday”—that they must either be true or false; but with regard to future propositions this is not the case; for suppose we say “there will be a battle to-morrow between the Turks and Servians”—this may be probable or improbable, but it is neither true nor false. Obviously, there is no existing fact with which to compare such propositions, and thus to pronounce on their truth or falsehood. But it is argued here that if future propositions, or prophecies, could be pronounced to be certainly true, it would do away with human agency and free will. This may seem hardly worth enumerating, but it was new at the time when this book was written.

The writer, in considering “modal propositions,” which assert things as necessary, probable, or possible, introduces some discussion on “possibility,” and mentions three heads of the possible. Ordinarily, things in this world are first possible, and then become realised, or actual; but there is another class of things which are always actual, and the possibility in them is only latent or implied—such are the “first substances” which have existed from all eternity; and thirdly, there is a class of things which always seem possible, and yet can never be realised—for instance, the greatest number or the least quantity, which, while we speak of them, ne-

one can ever say that he has reached. In this passage we find ourselves rather in the region of Metaphysics than of Logic, and it is remarkable that here the phrase "first substances" is used, not, as in the 'Categories,' to denote ordinary individual existences on the earth, but as a term to denote the eternal, primeval substances which have never not been, such as, in Aristotle's view, were the stars, and sun, and planets.

The treatise 'On Interpretation' was evidently not written at the same time with the 'Categories,' or is by a different author, and on a different plane of thought. It is more philosophical and more Aristotelian; it quotes both the 'Analytics' and the work 'On the Soul,' and therefore cannot be an early production of the Stagiraite's. There is a tradition that Andronicus of Rhodes held that this treatise was not written by Aristotle at all, while Ammonius, a great commentator, argued in favour of its genuineness. Their arguments, which have been preserved, do not seem conclusive one way or the other. Perhaps the only reason against considering this to have been the writing of Aristotle himself is, that while it obviously is as late as the period of his great treatises, it is not in the manner of those treatises. On the whole, it seems safest to conclude that this little book must consist of the notes of Aristotle's oral teaching upon the elementary bases of Logic, faithfully recording his ideas, and often the very words which he had used.

We may set aside, then, the 'Categories' and the 'Interpretation' as of doubtful origin, and as at all events not having been originally intended for the

place which they have so long held in the forefront of the writings of Aristotle. We turn to that which was, so far as we know, in reality the opening treatise of the Aristotelian Encyclopædia—namely, the ‘Topics;’ and there is some peculiarity to be remarked in the very fact that the subject with which it deals should have been the first to be taken in hand. We know that Aristotle founded, and all but completed, the science of Logic; but we are apt to forget that, when he began to write, the very idea that there was, or could be, such a science had never come into anybody’s head. What philosophers then knew about, and practised, and formulated, was not Logic, or the science of the laws of reasoning, but Dialectic, or the art of discussion. This art was by no means confined to philosophers, but it was the fashion of the day, and was widely and constantly in use in Athenian society, as an intellectual game or fencing match. The dialogues of Plato give us dramatic specimens of the encounter of wit which might be seen exhibited in numerous Athenian circles from the middle of the fifth century B.C. down to the time of Aristotle. That restless and intellectual people who, three and a half centuries later, were described as “spending their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing,” were at an earlier period possessed by an insatiate appetite for discussion and controversy, whether with a view to truth, or to mere victory over an opponent. Dialectic then, as an art, was thoroughly recognised, and all but universally practised, yet still the fundamental principles on which it must rest had never yet been pro-

perly drawn out, and Aristotle seems to have felt it to be the first task for one who would build up the entire fabric of knowledge, to lay down the laws of Dialectic as the art and science of method. "Dialectic," he says, "is useful for three things: for exercise of the mind, for converse with other men, and for knowing how to question and handle the principles of philosophy." And the object of his 'Topics' is, as he tells us, "to discover a method by which we shall be able to reason from probabilities on any given question, and to defend a position without being driven to contradict our own assertions."

Properly speaking, Dialectic, as defined by Aristotle, ought not to come first in the order of sciences, for it is a kind of applied reasoning; it is reasoning applied to that which is not certain, but only probable. Therefore the general principles of reasoning should be drawn out first, and then these should be shown in application to the certainties of science, after which a subordinate branch might be added on reasoning upon probabilities. Aristotle, however, as we have said, did not set out with the conception of Logic, or the science of reasoning, as existing by itself. This only gradually dawned upon him, and it was out of his researches in Dialectic that he was led to develop the idea of Logic. It was in thinking out the rules of Dialectic that Aristotle discovered the principles of the Syllogism, and he was justly proud of the discovery. There are only two passages in all his extant writings in which he speaks of himself: one is that in which he apologises for differing from Plato, "because truth must be pre-

ferred to one's friend ;" the other is the passage at the end of the 'Fallacies' (which is a sort of appendix to the 'Topics'), where he refers to his services to Dialectic. "In regard to the process of syllogising," he says, "I found positively nothing said before me : I had to work it out for myself by long and laborious research." The discovery of the structure of the syllogism—that is to say, of the forms in which men do, and must, reason about a great many things in life, was of course very useful for dialectical purposes, both for exposing fallacy in others and for keeping one's self straight in controversy. But Aristotle, while in the course of writing his treatise on Dialectic, seems to have been impressed with the independent importance of the theory of the Syllogism, and of the necessity for a simple, unapplied Logic. So, after completing seven books of his 'Topics,' he dropped the subject, and went on to write his first and second series of 'Analytics ;' and it was only after he had finished these two great works that he returned to complete the 'Topics,' by the addition of an eighth book.

The 'Topics,' as their name implies, are the books "treating of places," and "places" are seats of arguments, or matters in which arguments may be found. Aristotle in a long course of observation and analysis had apparently noted down the heads of reasonings most likely to be available for either attack or defence in dialectical controversy, and he here sets these forth in seven books. His object is to educate the reader to be a skilful dialectician in Athenian arenas. He names the four chief instruments for this purpose : 1st, To

make a large collection of propositions—*i.e.*, authoritative sayings, whether of great men or of the many; 2d, To study the different senses in which terms are used; 3d, To detect differences; 4th, To note resemblances. The last three out of these four suggestions are expanded at great length, and Aristotle tells us how to use various logical distinctions, here brought forward for the first time, in pulling to pieces the arguments of an opponent—for instance, how to use the heads of predicables (*genus, differentia, proprium, and accidens*), or the categories, or the several kinds of logical opposition, for this purpose. The first seven books of the 'Topics' scarcely touch at all upon dialectical method, they are quite taken up with a wearisome and seemingly endless list of heads of argumentation. The eighth book, written later, adds some counsel upon the arrangement and marshalling of your arguments, whether you be the respondent defending a thesis, or the interrogator who attacks it. Some of these pieces of advice might be characterised as "dodges;" for instance, when we are told how to conceal from our adversary what we want to prove, till we have got him to admit something which would really imply the point we are aiming at. In Dialectic, as in love and war, almost everything was fair. And yet Aristotle concludes his treatise by saying, "You must, however, take care not to carry on this exercise with every one, especially with a vulgar-minded man. With some persons the dispute cannot fail to take a discreditable turn. When the respondent tries to make a show of escaping by unworthy manoeuvres, the questioner on

his part must be unscrupulous also in syllogising; but this is a disgraceful scene. To keep clear of such abusive discourse, you must be cautious not to discourse with commonplace, unprepared respondents."

Athenian Dialectic has passed away, though it had a faint and clumsy revival in the "Disputations" of the middle ages. Even as a preparation for ordinary controversy and debate, it is questionable whether a study of Aristotle's 'Topics' would nowadays be found useful, except so far as the logical distinctions which it contains might sharpen the intellect. But this latter result might equally well be attained by studying the ordinary logics into which all those distinctions have been transplanted. The 'Topics,' at the time when it was written, was a work of original penetration, and of vast accumulative labour. Aristotle perhaps ought to have foreseen that it would not be worth his while to reduce Athenian Dialectic to a methodised system, but he did not; and much of what he accumulated for one purpose, came to have great value for another. The chief merit of the 'Topics' of Aristotle is, that while intended to be the permanent regulator of Dialectic, it became in reality the cradle of Logic.

Aristotle himself did not use the word "Logic," which was probably invented afterwards by the Stoics; he spoke of "Analytic," by which he meant the science of analysing the forms of reasoning. We come now to his 'Prior and Posterior' (or First and Second Series of) 'Analytics.' In these works he has produced nothing temporary, or of merely antiquarian

interest, but an addition to human knowledge as complete in itself, as permanent, and as irrefragable, as the Geometry of Euclid. It is true that Aristotle did not cover and exhaust the entire field in reasoning, just as Euclid did not exhaust the theory of all the properties of space. But so far as he went Aristotle was perfect. His work took its origin out of the examination of dialectical controversies, which, at the time when he wrote, much predominated over all that we should think worthy of the name of physical science, and therefore his aim was limited to the analysis of deductive reasonings. But men still reason deductively, and will always do so; during a great part of life we are employed, not in finding out new laws of nature, but in applying what we knew before, in appealing to general beliefs, or supposed classes of facts, and in drawing our positive or negative conclusions accordingly. To all this process, whenever it occurs, the 'Analytics' of Aristotle are as applicable as the principles of Geometry are to every fresh mensuration.

Aristotle invented the word "Syllogism," for the process of putting two assertions together and out of them deducing a third. This word indeed existed before in Greek literature, but in a general sense, meaning "computation," "reckoning" or "consideration." But Aristotle stamped it with the technical meaning which it has ever since borne. In introducing the word, however, it must not be supposed that he introduced, or invented, the process of reasoning to which he applied it, or that he ever pretended to do

so. Yet he has been ridiculed, as if this had been the case—as for instance by Locke, who says that it would be strange if God had made men two-legged, and left it to Aristotle to make them rational! The grammarian who first distinguished nouns from verbs and gave them their names, did not invent nouns and verbs, but only called attention to their existence in language; and he who first made rules of syntax was only recording the ways in which men naturally speak and write, not making innovations in language; and so Aristotle with his “*Syllogism*” only clearly pointed out a process which had always, though unconsciously, been carried on. There is no doubt that, ever since they have possessed reason at all, men have made syllogisms, though, like M. Jourdain making prose, they have for the most part been unaware of it.

The ‘*First Series of Analytics*’ is entirely devoted to the theory of the Syllogism, with a few collateral discussions. It has no connection with the treatise ‘*On Interpretation*,’ from which, in phraseology and some points of doctrine, it differs. It is a work which must excite our wonder if we consider the serried mass of observation which it contains, and the absolutely complete way in which it constructs a science and provides for it an appropriate nomenclature. Though countless generations of commentators and schoolmen have been busy with the ‘*Analytics*,’ and many modern philosophers have independently treated of Logic, none of them have been able to add a single point of any importance to Aristotle’s theory of deductive reasoning. The ‘*Analytics*’ are of course not light

reading. The style is severely scientific, and concisely expository; not a single grace of ornament, not a superfluous word, is admitted. As Aristotle introduced into these treatises a copious use of the letters A, B, C, to denote the three terms of the syllogism, many parts read like Euclid with the diagrams omitted. It is not necessary to attempt any further description of the contents, or to give here an account of the figures and moods of syllogisms, of conversion of propositions, reduction of syllogisms to the first figure, and the rest, because all these things have found their way into modern compendiums. Are they not written in Aldrich, and Mansel, and Whately, and many other books?

Yet there is one passage of the 'Prior Analytics' which we must quote in bare justice to Aristotle. Owing to the too exclusive study of his logical works in the middle ages, and owing to modern writers identifying him with the absurdities of his followers, an idea arose that he, like the least judicious of the schoolmen, thought that all reasoning should be through syllogisms, that nature could be expounded by means of syllogisms, and that syllogisms were a source of knowledge. Hence came protests like that of Bacon, that "the syllogism is unequal to the subtlety of nature." But nothing could be further from the truth than the whole idea. The reader may be assured that on a point of this kind Aristotle was as sensible as Lord Bacon or John Stuart Mill. After showing that syllogisms are constantly used, and after analysing their form, and showing on what their

validity depends, he proceeds to make some remarks on the way in which the major premiss, or general statement in the syllogism, is to be obtained. He says ('Prior Anal.' I. xxx.): "There is the same course to be pursued in philosophy, and in every science or branch of knowledge. *You must study facts.* Experience alone can give you general principles on any subject. This is the case in astronomy, which is based on the observation of astronomical phenomena; and it is the case with every branch of science or art. When the facts in each branch are brought together, it will be the province of the logician to set out the demonstrations in a manner clear and fit for use. When the investigation into nature is complete, you will be able in some cases to exhibit a demonstration; in other cases you will have to say that demonstration is not attainable." Bacon knew very little Aristotle at first hand; and he cannot have known this passage, else its overwhelming good sense must have stopped many of his remarks. And Aristotle in practice was quite true to the principles here announced. In his 'Ethics,' 'Politics,' and 'Physics,' he does not pedantically drag in the syllogism, but masses facts together, and makes penetrating remarks upon them, and discusses freely, by means of analogy, comparison, and intuition, very much as the ablest writers of the present day would do.

At the same time it must be admitted that, after fully explaining the deductive process, he left the theory of the inductive process, by which general laws are ascertained, almost entirely unexplored. He briefly

observes ('Prior Anal.' II. xxiii.) that "induction, or the syllogism that arises from it, consists in proving the major term of the middle by means of the minor." In other words, suppose that we are proving that animals without a gall are long-lived, we do so through our knowledge that man, the horse, and the mule have no gall. Now, in a natural deductive syllogism, we should say—

All animals without a gall are long-lived ;
 Man, the horse, and the mule, have no gall ;
 Therefore they are long-lived.

"Long-lived" is here the major term ; but in the inductive process we prove it of the middle term, "animals without a gall," by means of the minor term, "man, the horse, and the mule." So we require to state the inductive syllogism thus :—

Man, the horse, and the mule are long-lived ;
 Man, the horse, and the mule are animals without a gall ;
 Therefore (all) animals without a gall are long-lived.

Aristotle adds that, for the validity of this reasoning, you require to have an intuition in your reason that "man, the horse, and the mule" are, or adequately represent, the whole class of animals without a gall. This is, in fact, the crucial question in the inductive process : Do the instances you have got adequately represent the whole class of similar instances, so as to give you the key to a law of nature? For instance, if it is found that in two or three cases a particular treatment cures the cholera, how can you tell whether the induction is adequate, and that you are justified

in asserting, as a general principle, that "such and such a treatment cures the cholera." Modern logic tells us that a statement of the kind requires verification; and modern writers, such as Bacon, Whewell, and Mill, are at great pains to point out the best methods of verification, — which after all consist in observing and experimenting further; in eliminating all accidental circumstances; in reasoning, and, if possible, accounting for, the facts which go against your principle; and, finally, in either rejecting it as unproven, or bringing it out as completely established after passing through the ordeal of thorough examination. But the minute and cautious methods of experiment and observation which have gradually come into use among scientific men in modern times were unknown in the days of Aristotle; so it is not to be wondered at that, having so much else to think of, he did not enter upon this field of inquiry. He tells us repeatedly that we must draw our general principles from familiarity with particular facts; but instead of suggesting methods of verification for the validity of those principles, he merely says that they must have the sanction of our reason. It seems to have been his idea that, after gathering facts up to a certain point, a flash of intuition would supervene, telling us, "This is a law." Such, no doubt, has often been the case, as in Newton's famous discovery of the law of gravitation from seeing an apple fall. Yet still, in the ordinary course of science, verification ought always to be at hand. And Aristotle, in omitting to provide for this, left a blank in his theory of the acquisition of knowledge.

Aristotle, like Plato, drew a strong line of demarcation between matters in which you can have, and those in which you cannot have, certainty; in other words, between the region of opinion and the region of science. Syllogistic reasoning is applicable both to certainties and probabilities, and as such it had been formally drawn out in the 'First Analytics.' Its application by means of Dialectic to matters of opinion, had been set forth (in anticipation of the natural order of treatment) in the 'Topics;' and now Aristotle proceeded in his 'Second Series of Analytics' to write the logic of science, and to exhibit the syllogism as the organ of demonstration.

The attitude of science is of course different from that of Dialectic. In Dialectic two disputants are required, one of whom is to maintain a thesis, while the other by questioning is to endeavour to draw from him some admission which shall be repugnant to that thesis. In Science, on the other hand, we are not to suppose two disputants, but a teacher and a learner. Thus the 'Second Analytics' begin with the words:—"All teaching and all intellectual learning arises out of previously existing knowledge." This points at once to a characteristic of Aristotle's view of Science. In modern times we associate Science most commonly with the idea of the inductive accumulation of knowledge; and thus we talk of "scientific inquiry;" but Aristotle thinks of Science as deductive and expository, and identifies it with "teaching." If we look at the specimens of scientific reasoning which he gives us in this book, we shall find that a large proportion of

them are taken from Geometry. Next to this, the science most frequently appealed to is Astronomy. But he also mentions Arithmetic, Optics, Mechanics, Stereometry, Harmonics, and Medicine. Sometimes he refers to questions of Natural History, and at other times to questions of Botany. He even applies his scientific method to Ethics, and shows how we are to obtain a definition of the virtue of magnanimity, by observing the leading characteristics of those who are called magnanimous. The Sciences are not classified here, but a comparative scale of perfection among them is indicated; and these are generally laid down to be the most perfect Sciences which are the most elementary and abstract. But with all this leaning towards an ideal of pure and abstract science, it is remarkable how much the Sciences of Observation are considered in this book, and what an enlightened and modern atmosphere breathes through many parts of it.

In developing his idea of Science, Aristotle takes occasion to controvert several opinions which had found vogue in his day. One of these was that everything in Science could be proved. Some men had a notion that you could go back *ad infinitum* in proving the principles from which your science was deduced: "This principle was true because of that, and that because of something else, and so on for ever." Others fancied that by a kind of circular reasoning the propositions of Science might all be made to prove each other. "No," says Aristotle, "Science must commence from something that is not proved at all." Science must start from *immediate* principles—*i.e.*, principles

that cannot be established by any middle term, or, in other words, by any syllogistic reasoning. The axioms of Euclid may give us a specimen of such principles, but, according to Aristotle, each science had its own "primary universal, and immediate principles;" these principles, we are distinctly told, are not innate, but the source of them is the *Nous* or Reason, which (as we have seen) attains them intuitively, when sufficiently advised, so to speak, by a course of inductive observation. Again, Aristotle brings out here his opposition to Plato's theory of Ideas: he says, that it is not necessary for Science that the Ideas of things should have a separate existence, but only that universal ideas, or genera, should be capable of being predicated of many individuals. This view seems to correspond with what, in modern times, has been called Conceptualism, and which is a compromise between Nominalism and Realism.

These, however, are metaphysical distinctions. Another point more closely belonging to the Logic of Science is brought out against Plato—namely, the separateness of the Sciences, which follows from each Science having its own appropriate principles. Plato conceived, or appeared to do so, that from the principles of Philosophy (*i.e.*, Metaphysics), right doctrines of Ethics and Politics could be deduced. Hence he said, "It will never be well with the State till the kings are philosophers, or the philosophers kings." Aristotle, on the other hand, considered the speculative conception of the good, as entertained by a metaphysician, to be quite distinct from the practical concep-

tion of the good which occupies the statesman or the moralist. In many ways this demand, made by Aristotle of the separate spheres of different Sciences, gave rise to great clearness of view.

The Logic of Science deals, as might be expected, with the method of defining things,—that is, of saying what they are. But we do not here find the scholastic idea of definition, *per genus et differentiam*, by stating the class to which a thing belongs, and the characteristic which separates it from the rest of that class. Aristotle takes the more real and thorough position that, to define a thing adequately, you must state its cause. “Science itself,” he says, “is knowledge of a cause.” But what is cause? There are four kinds: the “formal,” which is the whole nature of a thing, being the sum of the other three causes; the “material,” or the antecedents out of which the thing arises; the “efficient,” or motive power; and the “final,” or object aimed at. Speaking generally, the causes most in use for scientific definitions are the efficient and the final. We define an eclipse of the moon by its efficient cause, the interposition of the earth. We define a house by its final cause,—a structure for the sake of shelter.

One quotation, as a specimen, may conclude these glimpses of the ‘*Later Analytics*,’ or Aristotle’s Logic of Science: “Nature,” he says, “presents a perpetual cycle of occurrences. When the earth is wet with rain, an exhalation rises; when an exhalation rises, a cloud forms; when a cloud forms, rain follows, and the earth is saturated: so that the same term

recurs after a cycle of transformations. Every occurrence has another for its consequent, and this consequent another, and so on, till we are brought round to the primary occurrence."

After finishing his 'Later Analytics,' Aristotle seems to have taken up Rhetoric, and to have written the main part of his treatise on that subject. He then reverted to Dialectic, and completed his exposition of it by writing his book on 'Sophistical Confutations,' which now stands as the conclusion of the 'Organon.' The matter treated of in this book has a close connection with that treated of in the 'Topics.' The practice of Dialectic at Athens had given scope to a class, which gradually arose, of professional and paid disputants, or professors and teachers of the art of controversy. This professional class, who were called the "Sophists," got a bad name in antiquity; and Aristotle treats them disparagingly as mere charlatans. Thus while Contentiousness is arguing for victory, he describes Sophistry as arguing for gain. The Sophist, according to Aristotle, tried to confute people and make them look foolish, employing for this purpose, not fair arguments, but quibbles and fallacies; and all this was done in order to be thought clever and to get pupils. An amusing picture of this sort of process is given in Plato's dialogue called 'Euthydemus,' where two professionals are represented as bamboozling with verbal tricks an ingenuous youth, until Socrates by his dialectical acumen and superior wit rescues the victim from his tormentors, and turns the tables upon them. The following is a specimen of the "sophistical confutations"

in 'Euthydemus': "Who learn, the wise or the unwise?" "The wise," is the reply: given with blushing and hesitation. "And yet when you learned you did not know and were not wise?" "Who are they who learn the dictation of the grammar-master, the wise boys or the foolish boys?" "The wise." "Then after all the wise learn." "And do they learn what they know or what they do not know?" "The latter." "And dictation is a dictation of letters?" "Yes." "And you know letters?" "Yes." "Then you learn what you know." "But is not learning acquiring, knowledge?" "Yes." "And you acquire that which you have not got already?" "Yes." "Then you learn that which you did not know." *

Plato's picture is, doubtless, a caricature, exaggerating the fallacious practices of the lowest sort of professional disputants to be met with in those days at Athens. But the dialogue 'Euthydemus' seems to have suggested to the scientific mind of Aristotle the idea of classifying all the fallacies that had been or could be employed in argument, and the 'Sophistical Confutations' is the result. To the value of this book it makes no difference how far the quibbles and deceptive reasoning adduced had been actually used by certain definite individuals for mercenary purposes, or whether, historically speaking, the professional "Sophists" of Greece were as bad as Plato had represented them. Putting the "Sophists" of Greece quite out of consideration, fallacy, whether voluntary or involuntary,

* See Professor Jowett's Introduction to 'Euthydemus' in his 'Dialogues of Plato,' i. p. 184, 2d ed.

will still remain, and is still always incident to human reasoning. And this it is which Aristotle undertakes to classify. It might be thought that errors in reasoning were infinite in number, and incapable of being reduced to definite species; but this is not the case, because every unsound reasoning is the counterfeit of some sound reasoning, and only gains credence as such. But the forms of sound reasoning are strictly limited in number, and therefore the forms of fallacy must be limited also. Ambiguity in language is, of course, one main source of fallacy; and fallacy arises whenever either the major, the minor, or the middle term of a syllogism is used with a double meaning. It will be seen above that the quibblers in 'Euthydemus' employ the terms "wise," "learn," and "know" in double senses so as to cause confusion.

Aristotle's account of the fallacies attaching to syllogistic or deductive reasoning is complete and exhaustive, and has been the source of all that has subsequently been written on the subject. The fallacies of *amphibolia*, *accidens*, *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, *ignoratio elenchi*, *petitio principii*, *consequens*, *non causa pro causa*, and *plures interrogationes* have become the property of modern times, with names Latinised from those by which Aristotle first distinguished them; and in Whately's, and other compendiums, they may be found duly explained. It is true that Aristotle does not investigate the source of error attaching to the inductive process; the "idols of the tribe" and "of the den" he left for Bacon to denounce; and the fallacies of "inspection," "colligat-

tion," and the rest to be supplied by Whewell and Mill. But with regard to this, it must be observed that he treats of the doctrine of Fallacies as supplementary, not to the Logic of Science, but to Dialectic. All through the 'Sophistical Constitutions' we have a background of Hellenic disputation. The questioner and the answerer are hotly engaged, and the bystanders keenly interested, — Aristotle in analysing fallacy is primarily contributing artistic rules for the conduct of the game. The local and temporary object has passed away, and much of the original importance of the book has accordingly been lost; but the distinctions which were here for the first time drawn out have passed over into Logic, and have doubtless contributed somewhat to clear up the thought and language of Europe.

CHAPTER IV.

ARISTOTLE'S 'RHETORIC' AND 'ART OF POETRY.'

WE have seen how Aristotle, when a young man, during his first residence at Athens, opened a school of Rhetoric, in rivalry to the veteran Isocrates. During his second residence, he presided over a school, not of Rhetoric alone, but of Philosophy and of all knowledge. Yet it is said that in the Peripatetic school "Rhetoric was both scientifically and assiduously taught." * Rhetoric had now, however, become for Aristotle merely one in that wide range of sciences, each of which he had set himself, as far as possible, to bring to perfection. He turned to it, in due course, from his achievements in Logic, and produced his great treatise on this subject. Goethe said of his 'Faust' that "he had carried it for twenty years in his head, till it had become pure gold." The first part of the 'Rhetoric' of Aristotle bears marks of having gone through a similar process. The outlines of its arrangement are characterised by luminous simplicity, the result of long analytic reflection; the scientific exposition is made

* Professor Jebb's 'Attic Orators,' ii. 431. See Diog. Laert., V. i. 3.

in a style which is, for Aristotle, remarkably easy and flowing; and each part of the subject is adorned with a wealth of illustration which indicates the accumulation of a lifetime.

Several treatises on Rhetoric had appeared in Greece before Aristotle sat down to write about it. Only one of these, but perhaps the best of them, has come down to us. Curiously enough it has been preserved among the works of Aristotle, as if it had been written by him, and it goes by the name of the 'Rhetoric addressed to Alexander,' having a spurious dedication to Alexander the Great tacked on to it. It is believed by scholars to be the work of Anaximenes of Lampsacus, an eminent historian and rhetorician contemporary with Aristotle. It is entirely practical in its aim, but it bears traces of the sophistical taint, and deals over-much in those tricks of argument and disputation which got the Sophists their bad name. The other lost systems of Rhetoric by Corax, Tisias, Antiphon, Gorgias, Thrasymachus, and others, appear to have been all strictly practical. Aristotle complains* that they confined themselves too much to treating of forensic oratory, and to expounding the methods best adapted for working on the feelings of a jury. His own aim is broader and more philosophical: while he defines Rhetoric as "the art of seeing what elements of per-

* There was another System of Rhetoric, which, perhaps, should not be included in this number—namely, the 'Rhetoric of Theodectes,' which Aristotle refers to in his third book (III. ix. 10), as containing a classification of prose periods. There was a tradition that Aristotle contributed an introduction to the 'Rhetoric of Theodectes.'

suasion attach to any subject," he traces out these "elements of persuasion" to their root in the principles of human nature.

The "sources of persuasion" Aristotle reduces to three heads: *first*, the personal character which the orator is able to exhibit or assume; *second*, the mood into which he is able to bring his hearers; *third*, the arguments or apparent arguments which he can adduce. That this is a correct division, we can see in a moment by applying it to any great piece of oratory in ancient or modern times. For instance, take the speech of Antony over the body of Julius Cæsar, as imagined by Shakespeare, — here the orator's first object evidently is to inspire belief in himself as "a plain, blunt man," with no ulterior purposes, merely devoted to his friend, bewildered by the death of that friend, unable to understand how confessedly "honourable" men should have brought it about. Accordingly, in the first pause of the speech the citizens say to each other:—

2d Cit. Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

3d Cit. There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony."

The second object is to produce in the hearers a frame of mind favourable to the designs of the orator, who accordingly awakens in them the passions of gratitude and love towards the memory of Cæsar by the recital of his good deeds, then leads them on to pity and indignation at the thought of the injustice done to him, and finally rouses them to horror and rage by the actual sight of his wounded corpse. Besides this assumption of a particular character, and these appeals to the pas-

sions, there are intellectual arguments running through the speech, to the effect that Cæsar was unjustly accused of ambition, and unjustly put to death. And the practical conclusion is urged on the hearers by all these various means—that they should rise in revolt and avenge the death of Cæsar upon his murderers.

This imaginary speech belongs, of course, to the class of deliberative oratory, the object of which is to recommend some course of action. This kind, says Aristotle, deals with the future; while judicial oratory, in criminal or civil cases, endeavours to give a certain complexion to the transactions of the past. And there is a third kind, the oratory of display, which, in proposing toasts and the like, deals chiefly in descriptions of the present. In each of the three kinds of oratory, the three “sources of persuasion” above noted, must be employed. But in order to exhibit the features of a particular character the orator must know the moral nature of man in its various phases; and, in order to work upon the feelings, he must know, so to speak, the inner anatomy of the feelings. A knowledge of human nature is, of course, essential for producing persuasion in the minds of men, and Aristotle thus says that Rhetoric is a compound of Logic and Moral Philosophy. In this treatise he supplies a rich fund of psychological remarks on the various passions and characteristics of men. In the condensed knowledge of the world which it displays the ‘Rhetoric’ might be compared with Bacon’s ‘Essays.’ It might be compared also with them in this respect—that a bad and Machiavellian use might certainly be made of some of the suggestions which it contains.

though Aristotle professes to give them solely to be used in the cause of truth and justice.

With regard to the third "source of persuasion"—the arguments used by an orator must not be scientific demonstrations, nor even dialectical syllogisms, but rhetorical arguments, such as the conditions and circumstances of oratory will admit. For the orator is not like the scientific demonstrator before his pupils, nor is he like the dialectician with his respondent, who will grant him the premisses of his argument. The orator has to address a crowd of listeners, with whom as yet he is not in relation; he has to catch, without fatiguing, their attention, and to suggest conclusions without going through every step of the inference. All reasoning, however, must be either inductive or deductive, and the arguments of Rhetoric must each belong to one of these two forms. Aristotle, adapting special names for the purpose, says that the *enthymeme* of Rhetoric answers to the syllogism of Logic, and that the *example* of Rhetoric answers to the induction of Logic.

The word "enthymeme" seems to mean etymologically "a putting into one's mind," or "a suggestion." It is a rhetorical syllogism with premisses constructed out of "likelihoods," or "signs." Some critics consider that it was essential to the "enthymeme" to have one of its premisses suppressed; but Aristotle only says ('Rhet.' I. ii. 13) that this was frequently the case. The real characteristic of the "enthymeme" was its suggestive, but non-conclusive, character; for the premisses, even if expressed in full, would not be sufficient to enforce the conclusion which is pointed at. The "enthymeme"

argues either from a "likelihood," that is—a cause which might produce a given effect, though it is not certain to do so; or else from a "sign," that is—an effect which might have been produced by a given cause, though it might also have been produced by something else. To prove that A murdered B, you may argue from the "likelihood" that he would do so, because he was known to have been at feud with him; or from the "sign" that A had blood upon him. Let us observe some of the "enthymemes" in the speech of Antony:—

- (1.) "He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill :
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious ?
- (2.) When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept ;
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
- (3.) You all did see, that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition ?"

These three arguments are based on "signs;" acts of Cæsar are adduced as showing in him a disinterestedness, a tenderness of heart, and a modesty which would be incompatible with selfish ambition. But the reasoning is not conclusive, since the acts mentioned might have flowed from other sources than good qualities of the heart—they might have been done "with a motive." However, there is fully as much cogency here as can ordinarily be expected to be found in the deductions of an orator. The only inductive reasoning of which oratory is capable is the "example," or historical instance. Instead of gathering sufficient instances to establish a

law, which would be the scientific method, the orator quotes one instance pointing in the direction of a law. Thus "Dionysius, in asking to be allowed a body-guard, aims at establishing a tyranny;—did not Pisistratus do just the same?" The "example" is, of course, an arguing by analogy, and the question must always be whether the cases compared with each other are really analogous, or whether there is any essential difference in the circumstances. Aristotle says that some orators deal more in examples, others more in enthymemes. He is inclined to think that in obtaining applause the enthymemes are the more successful.

After thus setting forth the general framework of oratory, Aristotle proceeds to make suggestions with regard to the matter of speeches. This will naturally be different in kind for the three different kinds of oratory. Him who is to practise deliberative oratory, Aristotle advises to study and make himself well acquainted with five points relative to the State to which he belongs: its finance; its foreign relations; the state of its defences; its imports and exports; and its system of law.* In reference to the last of these, Aristotle recommends the comparative study of political constitutions, and for that end that the accounts of travellers should be read. He adds that for political debate in general a knowledge of the works of historians is a valuable preparation.

These, however, are mere hints, directing the student to funds of information which lie outside of the art of

* The same points are specified in the advice given by Socrates to a young politician—Xenophon 'Memorab.' iii, 6.

Rhetoric. Aristotle proceeds to furnish the orator with definitions and theories which he considered (at all events when he was writing this treatise) to belong to Rhetoric itself, though it would have perhaps been a better classification of science if he had merely indicated that a knowledge of these matters was necessary, and had referred the student to Moral Philosophy for full particulars with regard to them. The result is that he gives a brilliant summary by anticipation of a considerable portion of his 'Ethics.' As in the 'Topics' he thought it necessary to make long lists of commonplaces for the use of the dialectician, so here he gives lists of heads to be borne in mind by the deliberative orator. It is not necessary for us to follow Aristotle in anticipating his theory of morals. It need only be mentioned that, after promising that the idea of obtaining personal good, or happiness, is what attracts men in deliberation, — he proceeds to give what may be called a provisional theory of happiness and its component parts; he then specifies thirty different grounds on which a thing might be recommended as good, and forty other grounds upon which a thing might be shown to be comparatively good, or better than something else. He winds up his instructions for the deliberative orator with brief remarks on the scope and character of different forms of government, which are afterwards fully expanded in the 'Politics.'

The oratory of display deals especially with praise and eulogy, as we know from the specimens of it most familiar to us: the funeral oration, and the post-prandial speech. The orator in this kind must have

before him a clear idea of what constitutes virtue, and of what is, or is considered, most honourable among men. And for his benefit Aristotle inserts a chapter on these subjects, though they more properly belong to moral science. He adds, however, some hints on the rhetorical device of amplification in laudatory, or other, statements. He appends the remark that a knowledge of the theory of virtue is necessary for the deliberative orator also, for the purposes of exhortation and advice. He thus would evidently class hortative addresses, like the modern sermon, under the head of deliberative oratory.

For the use of the forensic orator, who has to argue in accusation or defence, the following equipment of knowledge is provided by Aristotle: 1st, A brief summary of the motives of human action; 2d, An analytical account of pleasure and things pleasurable—for these figure most prominently among human motives; 3d, An analysis of the moods of mind in which men commit injustice; 4th, A distinction between different kinds of law and right; 5th, Remarks on degrees of guilt; and, 6th, Hints for dealing with statutes, documents, and the evidence of witnesses whether these be for or against the orator. Under the 4th head, Aristotle has some fine remarks on the universal law of nature, and on equity.* As a specimen the latter may be quoted:—

“It is equity to pardon human feelings, and to look

* *Epieicheia*, that quality which Mr Matthew Arnold defines as “a sweet reasonableness.”

to the lawgiver, and not to the law; to the spirit, and not to the letter; to the intention, and not to the action; to the whole, and not to the part; to the character of the actor in the long run, and not in the present moment;—to remember good rather than evil, and good that one has received, rather than good that one has done; to bear being injured; to wish, to settle a matter by words rather than by deeds; lastly, to prefer arbitration to judgment, for the arbitrator sees what is equitable, but the judge only the law, and for this an arbitrator was first appointed, in order that equity might flourish.”

So much for the materials of oratory. In making use of them, it will be further necessary for the orator to be acquainted with the leading passions and dispositions of men, in order that he may successfully appeal to the feelings of his hearers. Accordingly, the second book of the ‘*Rhetoric*’ supplies him with a treatise on the characteristics of Anger, Placability, Friendliness, Hatred, Fear, Shame, Gratitude, Pity, Indignation, Envy, and Emulation; of the three stages of human life—Youth, Maturity, and Old Age; and of the three social conditions—Rank, Wealth, and Power. In these disquisitions there is, probably, embodied much of the collective wisdom of Greece; but there is, doubtless, also a great deal of original analysis, worked out by Aristotle him- self. If once for all, and which has remained valid ever since. Such, for instance, are his six points of contrast between Anger and Hatred (‘*Rhet.*’ II. iv. 30):—

“1st, Anger rises out of something personal to ourselves; Hatred is independent of this. We may hate a man merely because we conceive him to be of a certain description. 2d, Anger is invariably against individuals; Hatred may embrace whole classes. 3d, Anger is to be remedied by time; Hatred is incurable. 4th, Anger wishes to inflict pain, so that its operation may be felt and acknowledged, and thus satisfaction obtained; Hatred wishes nothing of this kind—it merely wishes that a mischief may be done, without caring that the source of it be known. 5th, Anger is a painful feeling; but Hatred not. 6th, Anger, when a certain amount of pain has been inflicted upon its object, may easily turn into pity; Hatred, under all circumstances, is incapable of this, -it desires nothing less than the absolute destruction and non-existence of its object.”

With all his subtlety and knowledge of the world, Aristotle does not exhibit any of the cynicism of Hobbes or Rochefoucauld. He is far from denying the existence of disinterested and noble feelings. Thus, for instance, he defines friendly feeling to consist in “the wishing a person what we think good, for his sake and not for our own, and as far as is in our power, the exerting ourselves to procure it.” Pity he defines to be “a sort of pain occasioned by the appearance of a hurtful or destructive ill (such as one’s self or one’s connections might possibly have to endure) happening to one who does not deserve it.” Here fellow feeling is mentioned as necessary for realising the ills which

excite our pity, but that by no means reduces pity to a mere selfish apprehension on our own account. "The essence of pity," says Aristotle elsewhere ('Poet.' xxv.), "is that it is caused by the sight of *a deserved* calamity." Thus it proceeds from a sense of moral justice arising in the heart. Aristotle does not regard men as the natural enemies of each other; on the contrary, he thinks benevolent feelings to be natural, and to play a considerable part in the organisation of society. He defines "kindness" * to be "that quality by which one does a service to him who needs it, not in return for anything, nor in order that one may get anything one's self, but simply to benefit the recipient." He considers human nature to be capable of great moral elevation in the pursuit of the wise and good; at the same time he regards the majority of mankind as poor creatures, though rather weak than wicked. Thus ('Rhet.' II. v. 7), he says, "the majority of men are timid and corruptible," and in 'Eth.' VII. vii. 1, it is said that "most men are in a state between continence and incontinence, but rather verging towards the worse side."

We may conclude our extracts from the second book of the 'Rhetoric' with Aristotle's remark on the prime of life, which Dr Arnold of Rugby used to be fond of

* *Charis*, a word which can hardly be translated, as it means not only kindness, grace, or favour, but also the reciprocal feeling of gratitude for kindness. The *Charites* or Graces were the Greek personifications of reciprocal feelings of kindness. Hence the temple of the Graces symbolised the mutual services of men to each other, on which society depends (see 'Eth.' V. v. 7).

quoting: "The body," says Aristotle, "is in its prime from the age of thirty to thirty-five, and the mind about the age of forty-nine." It has been observed that university undergraduates are apt to consider these ages as set too high, while senior tutors have been known to complain of them as only applicable to precocious southern nations.

From what we have indicated it will be seen that the first two books of the 'Rhetoric' consist mainly of observations on human nature. Towards the close of them Aristotle fell upon the subject of fallacious "enthymemes," and this led him to suspend the work he had in hand, and to write that treatise on "Sophistical Confutations," or "Fallacies," of which we have already given an account. After which he wrote his 'Ethics,' until the subject of "Justice" turned up, and he then went on to discuss the bases of this quality in his 'Politics.' The subject of "Education" seems to have led Aristotle off from the completion of the last named treatise to write his 'Art of Poetry,' which naturally involved the discussion of rules of style; and this, by an equally natural transition, suggested the completion of the 'Rhetoric,' by the addition of a third book on Style and Arrangement.

This book has of course not quite so universal an interest as the former ones. The interest attaching to it is necessarily to some extent antiquarian—as, for instance, when Aristotle details the five points on which an idiomatic style in Greek depends,—viz., a proper use of connective particles; and of specially appropriate instead of general words; constructing the

sentence so as to avoid ambiguity: using right genders; and right numbers. The specification of the latter points (as well as similar injunctions in the *'Art of Poetry'*) shew in how infantile condition the science of Grammar was in Aristotle's time. He lays down here some of the things which "every schoolboy knows."

The book is not only a good deal limited to the instruction of Greek readers belonging to the fourth century B.C., but it also deals a good deal in allusions which such readers would perfectly understand, but which are obscure for us. Instead of quoting at some length the beauties of oratory, it frequently indicates passages by merely mentioning a single word out of them. There is generally speaking, an air of scientific dryness in its treatment even of the most poetical metaphors. For instance, we are told that it is far better to call Aurora the "rosy fingered" than the "purple fingered," and still more so than to call her the "red fingered." But charms of style from the Greek writers appear in this book like moths and butterflies pinned on to corks in the collection of an entomologist. Aristotle's fondness for classification seems carried too far here; he incessantly analyses and categorises, as for instance when he tells us that there are four ways by which "flatness" in a speech is produced. The principles laid down are of course sound and sensible—as, for example, that "the chief merit of style is clearness," that the orator must not use poetical language, and that his sentences must be rhythmical, without falling into metre. Aristotle

objects to having a sentence ended with a short syllable, because the voice cannot rest on it so as to mark a stop; he thinks that the end of each sentence should be marked out by the rhythm, so as not to need punctuation. He recommends the use of the *paon*, a foot consisting of three short syllables and one long syllable (as *ānāchrōnism*), for the rhythmical finish of sentences. The point, however, is not gone into with any exactness; and we are left in doubt as to the proportion which accent bore to "quantity" in ancient Greek oratory. On the one hand we know that accent has had such a firm hold on the Greek language as in the course of time utterly to overpower and eliminate quantity. Thus modern Greek is spoken entirely according to accent without regard to quantity. On the other hand ancient Greek poetry must have been read almost entirely in reference to the quantity of the syllables, without regard to accent. How it stood with ancient Greek rhythmical prose, is a question which Aristotle does not help us to solve. In fact there is a certain matter-of-fact bluntness, and a want of the delicacy and humour of genius, pervading his criticisms. And it is remarkable that his illustrations are more drawn from poetry than from prose - apparently more from books than from living sources, - and that he never mentions with appreciation the oratory of Demosthenes. Some of the greatest speeches of Demosthenes, especially his Olynthiac orations, had been spoken at Athens when Aristotle was little more than thirty years of age, just about the time when he was attempting to rival Isocrates in the teaching of Rhetoric.

It would be extraordinary if these splendid harangues made no impression upon him. But it must be observed that he does not pass any general criticism upon Pericles, or any other orator. And it is possible also that a fear of offending the Macedonian royal family may have prevented Aristotle from praising the anti-Macedonian statesman, though he was the greatest orator among the ancients.

After treating of style, Aristotle briefly discusses arrangement. He divides a speech into exordium, statement, proof, and peroration, and says something on the points to be aimed at in each. He adds some shrewd advice on the use that may be made of putting a bait questions to an opponent; and he mentions with approval the maxim of Cæcilius that "when your adversary is earnest you should silence him with ridicule, and when he tries ridicule you should silence him with earnestness." He neatly winds up his *'Rhetoric'* with the specimen of a peroration: "I have spoken—you have heard. You have the matter before you—judge of it."

Aristotle's little treatise called *'Poetic,'* or the *'Art of Poetry,'* is very interesting, but it does not take the modern or romantic view of Poetry. Aristotle does not seek to find here—

"The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream."

He simply defines poetry as one of the imitative arts, "such as dancing, flute playing, painting," &c.: these different arts, he says, have each their own in-

strument of imitation, and poetry uses words and metre. However, not all metrical composition is poetry; the verses of Empedocles are philosophy rather than poetry,—they lack the quality of being imitative,—that is to say, it is not their chief object to depict. Aristotle attributes the *genesis* of poetry, not to any divine impulse, but to those imitative instincts of man, which are exhibited from earliest childhood, and to the intellectual pleasure which we feel in seeing a good imitation even of a painful subject, and in recognising that “*this is that*.” Poetry then is imitation, and according to this theory the merit of a good poem would be the same as the merit of a good photograph,—exact and mechanical resemblance. Aristotle, however, is not consistent to this view; he evidently admits the idea of some creativeness in the poet, —for instance, he says that some poets represent men as better than they really are; and he applauds the practice of Zeuxis, who, in painting his Helen, combined the beauties out of several fair faces. He seems to approach the modern point of view when he says (xvii. 2) that “Poetry is the province of a genius or a madman;” for the one can feign and the other feels stormy passions. But it must be observed that the word for “a genius” here, is merely “well-natured” —a word elsewhere used for one who has a good moral disposition, and generally for one who has natural gifts. In fact, the philosophy of the imagination was a part of psychology not at all worked out in the time of Aristotle; there was as yet no word to express what we mean by “imagination.” When Aris-

totle uses the word *phantasia*, he means by it, not the creative faculty, but an image before the mind's eye. While the Greeks were the most imaginative of peoples, they had not as yet analysed the processes of imagination. And the want of a terminology connected with this subject is felt throughout the 'Poetic' of Aristotle.

Poetry consists in imitation, mainly of the actions of men; and there are three great species of it—Epic poetry, Tragedy, and Comedy. Of these three kinds Aristotle undertakes to treat; but the promise is only fulfilled with regard to the two first; the treatise breaks off at the point where a disquisition on Comedy might have been expected. Comedy, according to modern views, would hardly be reckoned to be poetry at all. Aristotle, in stating what Comedy is, gives his famous definition of the "ludicrous." Tragedy, he says, aims at representing men who are above the average; comedy, men who are below it. But the characters in comedy are not so much morally bad, as ugly. There is a certain pleasure derivable from ugliness, and that is the sense of the ludicrous. "The ludicrous is some fault or blemish not suggesting the idea of pain or death; as, for instance, an ugly twisted face is ludicrous, if there is no idea that the owner of it is in pain." This saying has been the foundation of all subsequent philosophy of laughter. Elsewhere Aristotle defines the ludicrous as "harmless incongruity." We laugh from a pleasurable sense of contrast and surprise when a thing is out of place but no serious evil seems likely to result.

Aristotle's account of Tragedy is a profound piece of aesthetic philosophy. By implication he defends Tragedy against Plato, who had wished to banish the drama from his ideal republic, as tending to make men unmanly. Aristotle defines Tragedy as the "imitation of some noble action, great and complete in itself; in melodious diction; with different measures to suit the different parts; by men acting, and not by narration; effecting through pity and fear the purging of such feelings." The latter words contain the office and the justification of Tragedy. Men's minds are prone to be haunted by the feelings of pity and fear, and these are apt to degenerate into sentimentality. Tragedy offers noble objects whereon these feelings may be exercised, and by that exercise the feelings not only receive a right direction, but also are relieved, being removed, so to speak, for the time from the system. After much discussion* on the subject in Germany, there is now no doubt that in using the term "purging" in the above passage Aristotle was employing a medical metaphor. This is borne out by two passages of the 'Politics' (II. vii. 11; VIII. vii. 5), which both refer in similar terms to the relief of the passions procured by indulging them. He promised a fuller explanation of his theory on this subject, but unfortunately has never given it. However, we are perhaps safe in understanding that, while Plato objected to Tragedy as tending to make men soft by the excitement of their sympathetic feelings, Aristotle said "No—those feelings

* See 'Aristotle über Kunst, besonders über Tragödie,' von Dr Reinkens (Vienna, 1870), p. 70-167.

will be purged and carried off from the system by the operation of Tragedy."

As to the means by which Tragedy is to excite pity and terror, Aristotle says that it will not do to exhibit a purely good man falling into adversity—that would be rather horrible than tragic; nor, on the other hand, would the representation of a villain receiving the retribution due to his crimes be a tragical story, however moral it might be. We require the element of undeserved calamity; and yet there must be some justice, too, in the course of events, so that, while we feel sorrow for what occurs, we shall feel also that things could not have been otherwise. The tale of *Odipus* is often mentioned by Aristotle as a perfect subject for Tragedy. We may add that Mr Tennyson's *Harold* exhibits in this respect the same qualities; we see in it a noble character borne along to an undeserved and calamitous doom; and yet there is a sense that this is, partly at all events, the result of his own doing. Aristotle is not in favour of a tragedy ending happily. He says that poets sometimes make happy endings out of concession to the weakness of the spectators, but that this is quite a mistake, and that such endings are more suitable to comedy. He praises Euripides as the "most tragic of the poets" on account of the doleful termination of his play, "though in other respects he did not manage well."

Much attention has been laid, especially by the French, on "the unities" of the drama, as supposed to be prescribed by Aristotle's *Poetic*. But in reality he attaches no importance to the external unities of time

and place. In enumerating the differences between tragedy and epic poetry, he says (v. 8) that "the one generally tries to limit its action to a period of twenty-four hours, or not much to exceed that, while the other is unlimited in point of time." But he does not lay this down as a law for Tragedy. The peculiarity of the Greek drama, in which a chorus remained constantly present and the curtain never fell, almost necessitated "the unities;" but Aristotle only concerns himself with internal unity, which he says (viii. 4) that Tragedy must have, in common with every other work of art, and which consists in making every part bear an organic relation to the whole, so that no part could be altered or omitted without the whole suffering. This principle, far more valuable than that of "the unities," would seem to need re-assertion, for we might almost say that it is habitually violated by writers of fiction in the present day, at all events by all but the very few who may be placed in the first class.

The 'Poetic' gives many notices of the rise and progress of the Greek drama, and the modifications which tragedy and comedy went through, and much information as to the technical divisions of a play, and other such matters; but all these points have become the property of manuals of "Greek Antiquities." Aristotle notes a decadence of the drama in his own day: he complains of authors spoiling their plays by introducing episodes merely to suit particular actors: he considers that *spectacle* is carried too far, and that it is a mistake to aim at producing tragical effect by

elaborate and expensive scenery and apparatus: he also thinks that acting is overdone. Aristotle shows an extensive acquaintance with dramatic literature; and, by mentioning it, he makes us regret the loss of 'The Flower,' a play by Agathon, which seems to have been entirely original, and not based on any traditional story.

The remarks here made on Epic poetry are comparatively brief. Aristotle considers it of less importance than Tragedy. He says that every merit which the Epic possesses is to be found in Tragedy. Like Tragedy, the Epic must possess unity of plot, but it may indulge to a greater extent in episodes. Aristotle never loses an opportunity of praising Homer, whom he considers to be the author, not only of the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey,' but also of a comic poem called 'Margites.' He especially commends the art of Homer in making the action of the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' respectively circle round definite central events. Although it is a narrative, Epic poetry will always be distinct from history: the one has an artistic unity which is wanting to the other; the one describes what might have been, the other what has been; the one deals in universal, the other in particular, truth. The result of this whole comparison is, that "Poetry is more philosophical and more earnest than History."

The 'Poetic' branches off, towards its close, into an immature disquisition on style, which led Aristotle to go back to his 'Rhetoric,' and write the third book thereof. Here he even lays down some of the elements of grammar, and enumerates the parts of speech. He

adds a curious chapter (xxv.) on Criticisms, and how to answer them, in which the spirit of the dialectician is very apparent. All this shows that Aristotle was only gradually feeling his way to the division of sciences. He wrote, as it were, under pressure, on one great subject after another, and the light only dawned on him as he went along. Could he have rewritten his works, probably all would have been brought into lucid order. But it is clear that the little treatise called 'Poetic' not only was never rewritten, but was never finished as its author intended it to be.

CHAPTER V.

ARISTOTLE'S 'ETHICS.'

ARISTOTLE'S treatise on Morals has come down to us entitled 'Nicomachean Ethics.' This label was probably affixed to the work on account of Nicomachus, the son of Aristotle, having had some subordinate connection with it, either as scribe or editor; and in order to distinguish it in the Peripatetic library from the 'Eudemean Ethics,' which is a sort of paraphrase of Aristotle's treatise by his disciple Eudæmus, and from the 'Great Ethics' which is a restatement of the same matter by some later Peripatetic hand. Among the Works of Aristotle there is also included a little tract 'On Virtues and Vices.' This is a mere paper, such as the Peripatetic school used to produce, noting characteristics of some of the Aristotelian good qualities and their opposites, and with no pretensions to be considered genuine.

After going through, under the guidance of Aristotle, the theory of the reasonings by which knowledge is obtained, and the theory of the statement by which knowledge may be best set forth, we now enter, in

the 'Nicomachean Ethics,' upon some of the matter of knowledge—namely, Aristotle's theory of human life. But what strikes us on reading the early chapters of this treatise is that, when he began to write it, Aristotle had no clear conception of the existence of Moral Philosophy as a separate science. The question which he proposes is, What is the end, or supreme good, aimed at by human action? He adds that the science which will have to settle this will be a branch of Politics—that is, of State-philosophy;—for the chief good of the State and of the individual are identical, only the one is on a grander scale than the other. In this exordium we may notice two especially Greek features: *first*, the cardinal question proposed for the philosophy of human life is not, What is the duty of man? but, What is the chief good for man? *Secondly*, the individual is so far subordinated to and identified with the State, that the *summum bonum* for the latter includes that of the former. In Aristotle's 'Politics' (VII. iii 8), the chief good for a State is portrayed as consisting in the development and play of speculative thought, all fit conditions thereto having been provided. The idea is—a Greek city, with a slave population doing the hard work, wherein the citizens for the most part can live as gentlemen, and a large proportion of them may devote their lives to intellectual pursuits. Aristotle thought that the highest aim for a State was to turn out philosophers, and that the highest aim for an individual was to be a philosopher. Thus there is a seeming identity of aims; yet still in writing his 'Ethics'

Aristotle confines himself to inquiring after "the good" for the individual. As he goes on, it dawns upon him more and more (see *Eth.* v. 5-11), that "the man" has an independent status distinct from that of "the citizen," and that in his capacity of human being each citizen has needs, aims, and virtues of his own, irrespective of the State. Thus by composing this work he established the separation of Ethics from Politics, —these two sciences having been previously mixed up together by Socrates and Plato, who were the great founders of both.

What constitutes the chief good for an individual, or in other words, happiness? Aristotle is somewhat abstract and metaphysical in arguing upon this question. He says, happiness must be an end in itself, and not a means to anything else; it must lie within the proper sphere or function of man, —that function being a rational and moral life; it must be, not a merely dormant state, but a state of conscious vitality; and lastly, it must be in accordance with the law of excellence proper to the function of man. Thus we arrive at the general idea that the highest happiness consists in the harmonious exercise of man's highest powers; and the treatise ends by declaring particularly that the speculative reason is man's highest endowment, and that the truest happiness consists in philosophic thought.

"This," he exclaims (*Eth.* X. vii. 7), "would be perfect human happiness, if prolonged through a life of full duration. Such a life, however, would be

superhuman ; for it is not as being man that one will live thus, but by virtue of a certain divine element subsisting within us. Just as this element far exceeds our composite nature, so does its operation excel action according to the moral virtues. Reason in comparison with man is something divine, and so is the life of Reason divine in comparison with the routine of man's life. One must not, however, obey those who bid us 'think humbly as being mortal men,' nay rather we should indulge immortal longings, and strive to live up to that divine particle within us, which, though it be small in proportionate bulk, yet in power and dignity far surpasses all the other parts of our nature, and which is indeed each man's proper self. By living in accordance with it our true individuality will be developed. And such a life cannot fail to be happy above all other kinds of life."

This, then, is the "mark" which Aristotle sets before men to "shoot at" ('Eth.' I. ii. 2) --namely, the attainment of a state in which one should live above the world, occupied with philosophic thought. It is an ideal picture, to which, however, approximations may doubtless be made. To attain it completely would be, according to Aristotle, to attain the life of the blessed existences, such as the sun and the fixed stars, and of God Himself, whose essence is Reason, and His life "a thinking upon thought" ('Met.' XI. ix. 1). This, he admits, is impossible for us ; but yet, he says, we should aim at it. "Secondary to this," he says, "in point of happiness, is the life of moral virtue."

And here we must notice the peculiar way in which the idea of "virtue" is introduced into the *'Ethics.'* Instead of at once recognising the law of moral obligation as the deepest thing in man, Aristotle, as we have seen above, introduces the idea of virtue and morality in a dry logical way, saying that the chief good for man must consist in the realisation of his powers "according to their own proper law of excellence." Having in this colourless and neutral way brought in the term "excellence" or virtue, Aristotle divides it, in relation to man, into moral and intellectual. Of the former he proceeded immediately to treat at length; of the latter he promised to give an account, but only an imperfect realisation of that promise, furnished by the "Eudemian" paraphrase, has come down to us.

Both by the way in which it is introduced, and the terms in which it is finally dismissed (*Eth.* X. viii. 1), the moral nature of man is made to hold a subsidiary place in Aristotle's *'Ethics.'* Yet still we find that almost all the treatise is taken up with discussions directly or indirectly concerning the practical and moral nature. And thus Aristotle, groping his way in a science which had as yet no distinct landmarks, contributed much towards the subsequent deeper conception of ethical questions. One service which he performed was to distinguish will from reason. Socrates and Plato had been content to describe virtue as knowledge, or an enlightened state of the reason; but Aristotle, like Kant in modern times, defined it as a state of the will. Secondly, he analysed the forma-

tion of this state, and explained it by his doctrine of "habits." By observing the various arts—as, for instance, harp-playing, and the like—he saw that "practice makes perfect;" and concluded that as by playing the harp a man became a harp-player, so by doing just things a man would become just, by doing brave things he would become brave; and, in short, that actions have a tendency to reproduce themselves, and thus to produce habits or states of the will. All this is trite enough now, but it was formulated for the first time by Aristotle.

In laying down his famous doctrine that it is the characteristic of virtue to preserve "the mean," Aristotle was not entirely original. In this, as in many other cases, he only fixed into scientific form a conception which had been previously floating in the mind of Greece. Hesiod, the Seven Sages, the unknown authors of 'Maxims,' the Gnostic poets, Pindar, and the Tragedians, had all preached the doctrine of moderation—a doctrine most congenial to the natural good taste of the Hellenic people, who instinctively despised excess in any form as unintellectual and barbarous. What had hitherto been a universal popular *dictum*, Plato raised into philosophy, by pointing out ('Philebus,' p. 23-27) that in all things the law of "limit" is the cause of good, while the unlimited, the unregulated, the chaotic is evil. Thus, in the human body, the unlimited is the tendency to extremes, to disorder, to disease; but the introduction of the limit produces a balance of the constitution and good health. In sounds you have the infinite degrees

of deep and high, quick and slow; but the limit gives rise to moderation and harmony, and all that is delightful in music. In climate and temperature, where the limit has been introduced, excessive heats and violent storms subside, and the mild and genial seasons in their order follow. In the human mind "the goddess of the limit" checks into submission the wild and wanton passions, and gives rise to all that is good. Thus, in contemplating all things, whether physical or moral, there was present to the mind of Plato the same train of associations, — the same ideas of measure, proportion, balance, harmony, moderation, and the like. Elsewhere (*'Republic,'* p. 400) he dwells especially on the common characteristics of art and morality, pointing out that measure and symmetry are the causes of excellence in both alike. Aristotle took over these thoroughly Greek ideas from Plato, and adapted them to his own purpose. He slightly changed the mode of expression: instead of "moderation" he introduced a mathematical term, "the mean" (for instance, 2 is the mean between 4 and 6); he used this term as the chief feature in a regular formal definition of moral virtue; and he drew out a table of the virtues showing that each of them was a mean between two extremes. Thus the virtue Courage lies between the vice Cowardice, which is fearing too much, and the vice Rashness, which is fearing too little. And virtue generally is a balance between too much and too little. It is produced by the introduction of the law of the mean into the passions, which in themselves are unlimited. But what is this "mean"—this *juste milieu*

—and how is it ascertained? Aristotle tells us that it is not merely the mid-point between two external quantities, but it is the mid-point relatively to the moral agent. What is too much for one man—say, of danger, expense, indulgence, or self-valuation—may be by no means too much for another man. The moral mean is thus a fluctuating quantity, dependent on considerations of the person and the moment. To hit upon it exactly requires a fine tact, for “virtue is more nice and delicate than the finest of the fine arts” (*Eth.* II. vi. 9). This tact, or sense of moral beauty, we have by nature (*Politics*, I. ii. 12); but it only exists in perfection, after cultivation by experience, in the mind of the wise man, and to him in all cases must be the ultimate appeal.

Objection has been raised in modern times to the theory of Aristotle, on the ground that it makes only a quantitative difference between virtue and vice. A little more or a little less does not seem to us to constitute the whole difference which subsists between “right” and “wrong.” But we must remember that the Greeks did not speak of actions as “right” or “wrong,” but as “beautiful” and “ugly.” From this point of view each action was looked upon as a work of art; and as in art and literature, so in morals, the great aim was to avoid the “too much” and the “too little,” and thus to attain perfection. This idea of beauty and grace in action pervaded the Hellenic life, and good taste seemed to stand in the place of conscience. To attain “the beautiful” is considered by Aristotle, if inferior to the joys of philosophy, still as a source of very high

gratification; and he describes the brave man (*Tab.* III. ix. 4) as consciously meeting death in a good cause, and consciously sacrificing a happy life full of objects which he holds dear, because by so doing he attains "the beautiful." If we ask, however, what constituted the beauty of this act? Aristotle's doctrine can only tell us that the brave man died and feared neither too much nor too little, but in the proper degree and manner, considering the circumstances of the moment. These *facts*, however, do not appear to explain what we should consider the moral beauty of the act in question. We should rather point to the self-sacrifice of the act; the spectacle of an individual preferring to his own life the good of others, the defence of his country, the maintenance of some noble cause—as what was beautiful and touching. "The mean" may serve as a general expression for the law of artistic beauty, but it seems not deep enough to express what we prize most in human action.

Aristotle's table of the virtues does not, of course, comprise the Christian qualities of humility, charity, elasticity, self-devotion, and the like. It even falls short of the summary of human excellence given by Plato in his enumeration of the five cardinal virtues (*Protag.*, p. 349)—courage, temperance, justice, wisdom, and holiness. Aristotle separates ethics from religion, and therefore leaves out all consideration of "holiness," or man's conduct in relation to God. "Wisdom" and "Justice" he reserves to be made the subject of separate discussions: the one as being an excellence of the intellect, and not a "mean state" of the passions; the other as

being dependent on, and mixed up with, all the institutions of the State. The table, then, thus restricted, contains the names of nine or ten good qualities, such as would adorn the character of a perfect Grecian gentleman. They are Courage, Temperance, Liberality, Magnificence (liberality on a larger scale); Magnanimity, or Great souledness; Self respect (the same on a smaller scale), Mildness, Wit, Truthfulness of manner, and Friendliness. And the pairs of extremes which respectively environ each of these "mean states" are specified, in some cases names being invented for them. The most moral of the virtues here named, from a modern point of view, is Courage, on account of the self-sacrifice, the endurance of danger, pain, and death, which it implies. Temperance is far from being represented by Aristotle as an utter self-abnegation; he says (III. xi. 8) that the temperate man, with due regard to his health, and to the means at his disposal, and acting under the law of the beautiful, will preserve a balance in regard to the pleasures of sense. Aristotle loves the virtues of Liberality and Magnificence (the latter meaning tasteful outlay on great objects) on account of their brilliancy. He undervalues the virtue of saving, and erroneously considers that parsimony does more harm than spendthrift waste. He describes Magnanimity by drawing a fancy portrait of the "Great souled man." Such a man has all the Aristotelian virtues; he is great and superior to other men, and has a corresponding loftiness of soul. He will not compete for the common objects of ambition; he will only attempt great and important matters, and otherwise will seem inactive;

he will be open in friendship and hatred, really straightforward and deeply truthful, but reserved and ironical in manner to common people. He will live for his friend alone, will wonder at nothing, will bear no malice, will be no gossip, will not be anxious about trifles, will care more to possess that which is beautiful than that which is profitable. His movements are slow, his voice is deep, and his diction is stately.

The four last virtues in the table are qualities to adorn the external man in society, and as such seem more worthy of a place in Lord Chesterfield's Letters than in a treatise of Moral Philosophy. To be mild without being spiritless; to be friendly without servility; to have a simple manner without either assumption or meek-humility; and to be witty without buffoonery, — these achievements constitute the minor excellences with which Aristotle concludes his list. He was proceeding to show that the law of the mean is exemplified in the instinctive feelings of modesty and virtuous indignation when, through some unknown cause, his MS broke off ('Eth.' IV. ix. 8) in the middle of a sentence.

What should have followed here was, *first*, a dissertation on the nature of Justice; and, *secondly*, an account of the Intellectual excellences. And it was very important that this part of the work should be adequately executed. Under the head of Justice fell to be considered ('Eth.' IV. vii. 7) the relation of the individual to truth of word and deed. And an adequate account of Justice and of Wisdom might have redeemed Aristotle's previous account of moral virtue from that superficial appearance which it must be said

to present. But unfortunately we do not appear to possess at first hand Aristotle's execution of this part of his task. What happened may perhaps have been this: when Aristotle arrived at this point, he put aside the subject of Justice, to be treated after he had written his 'Politics' and had cleared his views on the foundations of Justice in the State. At the same time he put aside the subject of the Intellectual excellences, perhaps till he should have written his 'Metaphysics.' It must be remembered that he kept many parts of his Encyclopædia in course of construction at once, and he would drop one part and take up another, as suited his train of thought. In the present case he did not entirely abandon his 'Ethics,' but went on to write the three last books, merely leaving the centre part to be filled in subsequently. Doubtless the matter for that centre part was expounded to and discussed in the Peripatetic school, but Aristotle probably never himself expressed it in literary form. When, however, Eudemus came to write his paraphrase of the 'Ethics,' he was enabled to fill in the gap which still existed in them by supplying a portion, the matter of which partly came from school notes and partly from Aristotle's other writings, while the language was that of Eudemus himself, continuous with the rest of the paraphrase. Afterwards Nicomachus, or some other editor, took this supplementary piece from the 'Eudemian Ethics' and stuck it in as Books V., VI., VII. of the 'Ethics' of Aristotle.

The theory of Justice which has thus come down to us as Aristotle's, is indistinctly stated in Book V. It

seems to be borrowed a good deal from the 'Politics;' it expounds the principles of Justice which exist in the State, and merely defines Justice in the individual as the will to conform to these principles. This really no contribution to ethical science is made. It is shown how Justice is manifested (1) in distributions by the State, (2) in corrective wrongs done between man and man, (3) in the ordinary course of commerce. Some first steps in political economy, being remarks on the nature of money, on value, and on price, given in chap. vi., are perhaps the most interesting points in this book.

Book VI. appears to be a good deal borrowed from Aristotle's 'Organon' and treatise 'On the Soul.' It is confusedly written, and two questions appear to be mixed up in it: (1) What is the Moral Standard? (2) What are the Intellectual excellences? The former question receives no satisfactory answer; with regard to the latter we are informed that there are two distinct and supremely good modes of the intellect—"Wisdom," which is the culmination of the philosophic reason, and "Thought," which is the perfection of the practical reason. This latter quality forms the main subject of the book. It is described as being developed in combination with the development of the moral will. It is an ideal attribute, and we are told that "he who has 'Thought' possesses all the virtues" (Eth. VI. xiii. 6). The distinction here indicated between the practical and philosophic reason was undoubtedly a contribution to psychology first made by Aristotle. It was an improvement upon the views of Plato, and a step towards those of Kant.

Book VII. supplies, in the words of Eudemus, a valuable complement to Aristotle's moral system. It discusses the intermediate states between virtue and vice, and especially analyses the state called "incontinence," or "weakness," as exhibited in the process of yielding to temptation. By aid of the forms of the syllogism it is shown how, while having good principles in our mind, we may fail under temptation to act upon them. On the other hand, the idea is introduced of an ideally vicious man, who has no conscience or remorse, but all his mind is in harmony with the dictates of vice; a conception with which we may compare the character drawn by Shelley in his portrait of Count Cenci. The whole of this book is marked by a phraseology different from and later than that of the genuine parts of the 'Ethics.' It deals much in physiological considerations, and it winds up with a modified paraphrase of Aristotle's treatise on Pleasure, given in Book X.

Books VIII. and IX. treat of Friendship, which "is either a virtue, or is closely connected with virtue;" and no part of the whole treatise is more pleasing or admirable. The idea of friendship has probably always found a place among civilised nations, but it obtained peculiar prominence among the Greeks, partly owing to the subordinate position assigned to women, and the consequent rarity of sympathetic marriages. Among the Dorians, from early times, there had subsisted a custom by which each warrior had attached to him, as his squire, a boy whom he was expected to inspire with becoming thoughts. The one member in this pair was called

"the inbreather," the other "the listener." Out of this custom sentimental relationships arose, which Plato approving wrote his famous descriptions of those pure and passionate attachments between persons of the same sex, known as "Platonic love." With this sentimentality Aristotle did not sympathise, but yet there is no coldness in his picture of friendship. He asserts enthusiastically the glow of the heart which is caused by contemplating the actions of a virtuous friend (IX. ix. 5), and declares that without this element in life no one can be called truly happy. Lord Bacon's splendid essay 'Of Friendship' may be compared with these pages; but Bacon's account of the advantages of a friend is on a lower level and less philosophical than that given by Aristotle, who goes to the root of the matter in saying that what a friend really does for you is, by the joint operation of sympathy and contrast, of *quasi* identity and yet diversity—to intensify the sense of your personal existence, and to give you that vividness of vitality on which happiness depends (IX. ix. 7). In this proposition the two books culminate, but they are full of lucid distinctions, and also of high morality. Friendship (as has been seen above, p. 87) is represented by Aristotle as an utterly disinterested feeling, often calling for great self-sacrifice. Sometimes, he says, the good man may be called upon to die for his friends (IX. viii. 9); and as a delicate form of disinterestedness he inquires whether in some cases one ought not to give up to one's friend, instead of seizing for one's self, the opportunity of doing noble actions.

Almost the only matter of any importance in the

'Ethics' of Aristotle which we have not already summarised is his disquisition on Pleasure in Book X. There was a good deal of abstract questioning in the time of Aristotle as to whether Pleasure could be "the chief good," or whether it could be considered a good at all. The Platonists were disposed to be hard upon Pleasure. But all this turned a good deal upon the prior question, "What Pleasure is?" Aristotle showed that an erroneous definition had been taken up by the Platonic school, who considered pleasure to be a sense of restoration,—a sense of our powers, after exhaustion, being brought up to their normal state. Kant has given a very similar definition, saying that "pleasure is the sense of that which promotes life, pain of that which hinders it." Aristotle says that this is wrong; that it applies only to eating and drinking, and such things, and that Pleasure is not "the sense of what promotes life," but the sense of life itself; the sense of the vital powers, the sense that any faculty whatsoever has met its proper object. Pleasure, then, according to the Platonists, was the accompaniment of an imperfect condition, like recovery after illness. According to Aristotle it was, except in the case of certain spurious pleasures, the play and action of that which is healthy in us. From this point of view it is obvious that Pleasure must in itself be a good, and that when it consists in the exercise of the highest faculties (see above, p. 102) it becomes identical with the highest happiness. Lest it be thought that this exaltation of Pleasure might have dangerous results from a moral point of view, we will mention one safeguard which accom-

pamies the Aristotelian doctrine. He tells us that for anything to be "good" in life, it must be an end-in-itself: that is, something desirable for its own sake, and not as a mere means to something else; something thoroughly worthy, in which the mind can rest satisfied. Thus all mere amusements are excluded from being good, because they are not ends-in-themselves. And this maxim may be deduced from Aristotle: "Act as far as possible so that at any moment you may be able to say to yourself, 'What I am now doing is an end-in-itself.'"

CHAPTER VI

ARISTOTLE'S 'POLITICS.'

THE 'Ethics' of Aristotle end with the words, "Let us then commence our 'Politics.'" He had described virtue and happiness, but neither of these, he says,* is attainable by any human being apart from society. Moral development and the full enjoyment of the exercise of our powers equally demand certain external conditions; they cannot exist save by the aid of a settled community, social habits, the restraint and protection of laws, and even a wisely regulated system of public education. Man is by nature a social creature; he cannot isolate himself without becoming either more or less than man—"either a god or a beast." The state is, therefore, a prime necessity for the "well-doing and well-being" of the individual. In fact, says Aristotle,† you cannot form any conception of man in his normal condition—that is to say, in a civilised condition—except as a member of a state. On these grounds Aristotle proposed to go on to the writing of his 'Politics' as the complement and conclusion of his ethical treatise. But some time probably elapsed before the design was

* 'Eth.' X. x. 8-23.

† 'Pol.' I. ii. 13, 14.

carried out ;* and in the interval it is not unreasonable to suppose that Aristotle, seeking, as usual, to base theory upon experience, was engaged in making that remarkable collection called the '*Constitutions*' (see above, p. 48), which contained a history and description of no less than 158 states, and of which numerous fragments remain.

However this may be, the '*Politics*' forms a rich repertory of facts relating to the history of Greece. And it abounds, too, in the knowledge of human nature, and in wise and penetrating observations on the conduct and motives of mankind, many of which are applicable to all times and countries. The treatise is not entire; it breaks off in the middle of one of the most interesting parts of all, namely Aristotle's theory of education. Perhaps this was one of the cases in which Aristotle, finding that his mind was not fully made up on a particular subject, dropped that subject for the time, meaning to revert to it, but never actually doing so. Besides its unfinished condition, the '*Politics*' also shows indications of a certain amount of disarrangement in the order of its books. If rearranged according to their natural order, the books in Bekker's edition would stand thus :—

Book I. On the Family as a constituent element in the State.

Book II. Containing a criticism of some previous theories about the State, and of some remarkable actual constitutions.

* Spengel, one of the most judicious of German critics, says, that "the '*Politics*' was written long after the '*Ethics*.'"

Books III., VII., VIII. Giving Aristotle's own conception of an Ideal State,—unfortunately not concluded.

Books IV., VI., V. Forming a return from the ideal point of view to practical statesmanship, and suggesting remedies for different evils apparent in the contemporary Governments of Greece.

It has been well pointed out * that in Aristotle's treatment of the above mentioned subjects three incongruous elements may be detected: "really scientific inquiry, aristocratic prejudice, and the dreams of a metaphysical philosophy which sears to heaven and listens for the eternal harmonies of nature." The scientific spirit shows itself in the vast apparatus of history which Aristotle employs, his researches into the customs of barbarous tribes, and his careful recognition of the immense variety to be found in constitutions coming under the same general name (such as Democracy, Aristocracy, &c.) when studied according to the peculiar circumstances of each case. All this would constitute his work a contribution to the science of "Comparative Politics."

But another spirit, alien from that of free and inductive inquiry, occasionally manifests itself, especially when Aristotle appeals to "nature" either in defending or attacking any institution. "Nature" is, of course, a rather slippery word: it may mean either of two things, — either "primitive condition," in which sense a savage is in a state of nature; or "normal condition," in which

* Mr A. Lang's *Essays on Aristotle's 'Politics,'* p. 15 (Longmans, 1877).

sense the most perfectly civilised man has attained his natural state. The latter sense is the one which Aristotle generally has in his mind; he generally means by "nature" the normal and perfect state of things, or a power in the world working towards that normal state. But the question arises, How do we know what is the perfect and normal state of things? Philosophers are too apt to dignify by the name of "nature" any arrangement for which they may have a predilection. And Aristotle cannot be entirely exonerated from having done so. He sometimes attributes a sort of divine right to things as they are, calling them "natural." Thus he treats of the family as "naturally" constituted of man, wife, child, and slave. Certain reformers of the 4th century B.C. had already lifted up their voices against the institution of slavery. They had argued that the slave was of the same flesh and blood as his master, and might be as good as he; and that, in short, slavery was merely an unjust and oppressive custom which mankind could and should alter. But to the mind of Aristotle slavery was a necessary institution in order to provide citizens with that amount of leisure which would enable them to live ideal lives in the pursuit of the true and the beautiful (see above, p. 10¹). Therefore with unconscious bias he proceeded to argue that slavery was "natural," on the ground that some races of men were by "nature" born to serve, being deficient in that "large discourse" of reason which other men possessed, and which gave them a "natural" right to command. He seeks for external indications of this great difference

between man and man, and says that slaves are "barbarians" (*i. e.*, ignorant of the Greek language and Greek manners), and again, that they have not the upright bearing of freemen trained in the *gymnasia*. But he admits that "nature" has failed in outwardly marking with sufficient distinctness the inward difference between the slave and his master. Yet still he is not shaken in his doctrine, but even asserts that it is lawful to make war on races which were intended by "nature" to be slaves, and to reduce them to slavery. These views may seem shocking; but yet they admit of some palliation. Christian theologians and divines, till within a very recent time, have defended slavery, appealing in its behalf to the sanction of the Bible; and even the virtuous Bishop Berkeley, while sojourning at Rhode Island, became the owner of slaves. The lot of a slave in Attica seems, generally speaking, not to have been a bad one. And Aristotle, in wishing the "naturally" deficient races of mankind to be brought into bondage, seems to have had some idea of the benefit they would derive from being, as it were, sent to school.

In another matter Aristotle appealed to "nature" not in defending, but in attacking, one of the institutions of society—namely, the putting out money at interest. Aristotle had many of the prejudices of a "gentleman;" we have seen before (p. 109) how he admired a brilliant liberality, and thought little of the virtue of saving. He acknowledged that means must be forthcoming for the maintenance of the family, but if possible, he would have these means come from the

produce of the soil,* crops, animals, or minerals, for these sources of support are "natural." With trade and traffic he had no sympathy, but he admitted that practically they must go on; and he said that people who valued success in such things might try and imitate the philosopher Thales, who fore-saw, by his astrology, on one occasion, that there would be a great olive harvest, and while it was still winter hired all the olive presses in the country, and when the demand for these set in, was able to get his own terms and realise a large sum, "thus showing that it is easy for phil-sophers to be rich, if they only cared about it." These contemptuous expressions in regard to commerce clearly indicate that Aristotle did not take a calm intellectual view of the subject; he did not see that it was a subject worthy of being reduced to a science, else he would not have left the doing of this to Adam Smith. Yet still in a book full of the kindest remarks on social arrangements we cannot fail to be struck by the antiquated look of the announcement that "lending money on interest is justly abominated, and is the most unnatural of all forms of gain, for it diverts money from its proper purpose (which was to be a mere instrument of exchange) and forces it unnaturally to breed."† This saying of Aristotle doubtless did something to foster the prejudice against "usury" and Jews, in the latter part of the Middle Ages. The notion is apparently based

* *Pol.* I. x. 2.

† Compare *Shakespeare*, 'Merchant of Venice,' Act ii. scene 3:—

Antonio. Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

Shylock. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.

upon the first-mentioned conception of "nature"—as the primitive state of things. "Interest is not a primitive institution, and therefore it is unnatural." The very opposite of this conclusion would be thought true nowadays. We feel now that money unspent "naturally" acquires interest and compound interest, and that in a civilised community nothing is more unnatural than the "talent laid up in a napkin."

An enthusiastic and almost mystical spirit exhibits itself in Aristotle when he discourses on the Ideal State. Having laid it down that Happiness for the state and for the individual is one and the same ('*Pol.*' VII. ii. 1), he seems for a moment to waver and hesitate as to whether he should not retract the doctrine expressed in the '*Ethics*' (see above, p. 102), that the happiness to be found in a life of thought is incomparably superior to that to be found in a life of action. Could this be said of a state—that is, of a whole community? If a whole community is engaged in the fruition of philosophical thought, must they not be isolated from international relations and cut off from the world? But Aristotle does not flinch ultimately from the results of his doctrine. He says ('*Pol.*' VII. ii. 16) that "it is quite possible that a state may be situated in some isolated position," enjoying good laws and knowing nothing of war or foreign relations, and that in such a state (VII. iii. 8) the community may be engaged in contemplations and thoughts which have their own end in themselves, and do not aim at any external results. As is the life of God or of the conscious universe (each

brooding over their own perfections), such will be the life of the Ideal State!

This announcement of the highest end to be aimed at by Politics is as if some modern writer, in treating of the State, should seek to identify it with the Invisible Church of God. Or, again, it may remind us of the saying that the supreme and ultimate product of civilisation is "two or three gentlemen talking together in a room." This paradox is true and quite Aristotelian: mental activities are the highest things of all; enactments, and police, and wars, and treaties exist for the sake of order, of which the best fruit is the mutual play of intelligence and the glow of friendship. But one peculiarity of Aristotle's ideal politics is the comparative smallness of their scale. Like a true Greek, he does not think of nations and empires, but of city-states. It has been said that the city-state was something like the University of modern times. Aristotle regarded it as an organism of limited size, in which every citizen should have his function, and in which every one should be personally known to the rulers. He said ('Eth.' IX. x. iii.) that 100,000 citizens would be far too many to constitute a state. Some of the peculiarities of his Ideal State may be specified as follows:—Every full citizen was to be a land-owner, with slaves to cultivate his soil, but no great accumulation of property in any one man's hands was to be allowed. The citizens were to constitute a warrior caste, and were each to be admitted in turn, when of mature age, to a share in the government. No artisan or tradesman was to be a citizen; the city

was to have a harbour, but not too near, so as not to be flooded with strangers; the navy was to be manned by slaves; the city itself was, for salubrity, to slope towards the east and to catch the winds of morning. Lastly, the State itself was to be a perfect Sparta in point of discipline, though aiming at something higher than mere gymnastic and military drill. There was to be a common primary instruction for all the citizens from the age of seven to fourteen, and a common secondary instruction from fourteen to twenty-one. The "branches" were to be gymnastic, letters, drawing, and music. Everything was to be taught with a view to culture, rather than to utility. Thus the object of learning drawing was "to make one observant of beauty." In regard to gymnastic, Aristotle wisely warns against a premature strain of the powers, and says that it is very rare for the same person to have won a prize, as a boy, and as a man, at the Olympic games. He lays great stress on the moral and educational influence of music, and its efficacy in "purging" the emotions (see above, p. 95). He disparages pipe-playing, which, he says, was adopted by the Athenians in the glorious period of licence succeeding their victories over the Persians; and adds that "pipe-playing not only disfigures the face, but has nothing intellectual in it." It is difficult for us to enter into many of the feelings of the ancients about music. Aristotle lauds the "Dorian mood;" and here his treatise breaks off, without his having given us his theory as to instruction in literature, or as to the secondary instruction in general of his ideal citizens.

In constructing a Utopia, Aristotle was, of course,

following the example of the celebrated 'Republic' of Plato; but his object was to improve upon the conceptions of his master, whom he criticised with courtesy, but in a prosaic spirit. Plato's "city" as wellly existed in dreamland, but Aristotle applied to it the tests of historical experience and even law possibility. While accepting the idea of a city of contemplation, Aristotle determined that its institutions should be such as to approve themselves to practical common-sense. The contrast between the two philosophers in this matter is very striking—the one daring, creative, and full of the play of fancy; the other laborious, matter-of-fact, and scientific. It is not certain that Plato's wild suggestions for a community of wives and property were meant to be taken seriously; but Aristotle takes them so, and gives us the first arguments on record against Communism. He defends the institution of property as "natural," and says that "It makes an unspeakable difference in the enjoyment of a thing to feel that it is your own." All his remarks on this point are sagacious; but there is a singular spirit of conservatism shown in his saying ('Pol.' II. v. 16) that "If Plato's notions had been good they would have been adopted long ago." Instead of looking forward to a future of discovery and progress, Aristotle rather looked back, thinking that all perfection had been attained in the past.

In Book IV., VI., V. of his 'Politics' (see above, p. 119), Aristotle turns from the ideal to the actual, and lays down a theory of the different forms of government which are possible, the causes which give rise to

these different forms, their respective merits and disadvantages, and the practical means for obviating the evils to which they are respectively exposed. Greek society was very unstable; Athens and many other cities were, like Paris during the last half-century, in chronic expectation of a revolution. Therefore a theory of seditions and revolutions became an essential part of Greek political science, and Aristotle furnishes one accordingly, containing the wise remark that "small things are never the cause, though they are often the occasion, of popular revolt." He shows that there are three normal forms of government,—the Monarchy, or government by one wise ruler; the Aristocracy, or government by a select number of the wisest and best; and the "Constitution," or mixed government, in which democratic, monarchic, and aristocratical elements are balanced against each other. Each of these normal and perfect forms, wherever they have existed, has followed a tendency to diverge into a corruption of itself;—the monarchy degenerates into Tyranny, the aristocracy into Oligarchy, and the "Constitution" into Democracy. These lower forms are the kinds of government which Aristotle practically finds in the world. He shows how each of them is constantly menaced by revolution, and from what special causes, namely, the peculiar jealousies which each is apt to engender. He says that it is not the desire of gain, so much as tenacity of rights or fancied rights, that causes revolution. He gives various pieces of advice to those who administer the different forms of government;—one of which is that each government should avoid

emphatically asserting its own special character. The democracy should be as little democratic, the tyrant as little tyrannous, the oligarchy as little exclusive and overbearing as possible,--so that in each case some approach might be made to the "golden mean," which is the true cause of political stability.

In his high appreciation of the "Constitution," or well-mixed government, Aristotle may be thought to have had an unconscious anticipation of the granted liberties, and of the combination of order with progress, which are the blessing and the pride of England. But in one respect he totally fails to come up to the grandeur of the modern conception; for, as said before, he thinks of arrangements for a city and not for a nation, and he has no idea of those representative institutions by which political freedom of action on a large scale may be provided. As his views for each state were limited, so also he did not take sufficient thought of international relations. For one moment he seemed to have caught a glimpse of possibilities which he might have followed out into important conclusions; for he says (*Pol.* VII. vii. 3) that "owing to the happy moderation of the climate of Greece, the Hellenic race possess a combination of the best qualities which fall to the lot of the human species, being both high spirited and intellectual; and if they could all together form one political state, the Greeks might govern the world." He drops at this isolated thought, but does not pursue it. At the moment when he was writing, the Hellenic race was in the utmost danger; it was, in fact, doomed to fall from its high position into political extinc-

tion, and all for the want of "solidarity," all from these jealousies which kept each Greek city apart from the rest. Aristotle's peculiar relations to the court of Macedon may have hindered him from freely entering upon this subject, or may have biassed his views; but the real fact seems rather to have been that, while he was a great philosopher, he was no statesman, and that, absorbed in the researches of science and in the dreams of an ideal state, he did not see the actual dangers of his country so clearly as his patriotic contemporary Demosthenes saw them. His contribution to politics was abstract and scientific, and as such remains valid for all time; his analysis of the pathology (so to speak) of oligarchies and democracies was found to be often strikingly verified in the history of the Italian republics. And however much the views of Aristotle fall short of the requirements of modern times, the 'Politics' will always form a valuable study for one who is likely to take part in the public affairs of his country.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE.

ARISTOTLE has now done with Practical and Constructive Science.* He turns from Man with his disputations, reasonings, oratory, poetry, moral and social life, to the subjects of Speculative Science, —to Nature, the Universe, and God. In glancing at the series of great treatises in which the results of his thoughts and researches upon these subjects are embodied, it will be convenient to divide them under the three heads of Natural Philosophy, Biology, and Metaphysics. First, then, the ‘Physical Discourse,’ the treatise ‘On the Heavens,’ that ‘On Generation and Destruction,’ and the ‘Meteorologies,’ form together a distinct whole,† and contain the Natural Philosophy of Aristotle, of which let us now notice some of the salient points, leaving his Biology and Metaphysics to form the subject of future chapters.

Natural Philosophy, as conceived by Aristotle, was far more metaphysical than the science which is called by that name in the present day — a science based on

* See above, p. 42.

† On the connection of these works see some general remarks above, pp. 45, 46.

mathematics, and starting, we might perhaps say, with the doctrines of Newton's 'Principia,' anything which lies beyond these doctrines being taken for granted. But in Aristotle's Natural Philosophy nothing is taken for granted. He commences by inquiring into the nature of "Existence;" and sets himself to answer some of the puzzles with which his predecessors, the philosophers of Greece, had racked their own and other people's brains. They had said, "How is it possible for anything to come into existence? Out of what can it come? It must come either out of the existent or the non-existent. But it cannot come out of the existent, else it would have existed already; nor can it come out of the non-existent, for out of nothing nothing can come." Aristotle solves this dilemma ('Phys.' I. viii.) by introducing what now seems a simple enough distinction—that between the "possible" and the "actual;" things come into existence, that is, into actuality, out of the state of the possible. Now the possible, or potential, is in one sense non-existent, as it is nothing actual; but, on the other hand, it is not mere nonentity, as it is by hypothesis a possibility of existence. All this may appear to be a mere matter of words; and it may be asked what we gain by having the words "possibility" and "actuality" added to our vocabulary? But, in fact, men think by means of words; and if a new formula can clear up the notions connected with such often occurring terms as "is" or "became," it is a gain, the reality of which is shown by the perplexities to which thinkers had been reduced to for the want of it.

Aristotle, pursuing his general reflections about Existence, says that in everything that exists you can trace three principles: the Matter out of which the thing arose, and which contained the possibility of its existence; the Form or actual nature which the thing possesses; and the Negation or Privation of all other natures. That is to say, a thing is what it is by not being what it is not. And thus all existence has a negative, as well as a positive, side (Ethic. I. ix.) These remarks form a metaphysical basis to Natural Philosophy.

In the second book of his 'Physical Discourse,' Aristotle quits the region of pure abstractions, and states, in interesting terms, his views of "Nature." He speaks of "Nature" as "a principle of motion and rest essentially inherent in things, whether that motion be locomotion, increase, decay, or alteration." "It is absurd to try to prove the existence of Nature; its existence is self-evident." "Nature may be said in one way to be the simplest substratum of matter in things possessing their own principle of motion and change; in another way it may be called the form or law of such things." In other words, Nature is both matter or potentiality, and form or actuality; both the simple elements of a thing and its existence in perfection. It is also the transition from the one to the other. "Nature," says Aristotle, "spoken of as the creation of anything, is the path to nature."

Paley's 'Natural Theology' opens with the celebrated argument which compares the world to a watch. "If one were to find a watch," says Paley, "he would

surely conclude that there must have been a watch-maker; and so from the marks of design in creation, which are like the adaptations to special purposes of each part in the watch, we must conclude that an intelligent Creator made the world." Aristotle, quite as strongly as Paley, admits the marks of design in nature. He says ('Phys.' II. viii. 14.): "The adaptation of means to ends which we see in the procedure of the animals makes some men doubt whether the spider, for instance, and the ant, do not work by the light of reason or an analogous faculty. In plants, moreover, manifest traces of a fit and wisely planned organisation appear. The swallow makes its nest and the spider its web by nature, and yet with a design and an end; and the roots of the plant grow downward for the sake of providing it with nourishment in the best way. It is plain, then, that the origin of natural things must be attributed to design." He repudiates the notion that "the heavens and the divinest of visible things" ('Phys.' II. iv. 6) can have been the result of the workings of blind chance. Nor will he accept the theory of Empedocles (which was like the Darwinian theory of Natural Selection in its extremest form) that blind chance hit upon the production of life, and that whole races of monsters and imperfect beings perished before the moment came when—by mere accident and coincidence—a creature was attained sufficiently perfect to survive ('Phys.' II. viii. 4). So far from chance having been the chief force in producing the framework of the Universe, Aristotle considers chance to be a mere exception, a mere irregularity, thwarting the reason and the wis-

dom which guides, and has ever guided, the operations of nature.

But, while utterly denying what Mr Darwin would seem to point to—that Reason is a result of the functions of matter, and is a comparatively recent development in the history of this globe—Aristotle would equally deny the thesis of Paley, that Reason, in the form of an intelligent Creator, existed separately before this world, and constructed the world as a watch-maker constructs a watch. While he considered Reason to have existed from all eternity, he thought that the Universe, pervaded in all its parts by Reason, had also existed from all eternity. Thus all idea of the world having been created was quite eliminated from the thoughts of Aristotle. He said the world *must* have been eternal, for everything which is created, or comes into existence, comes into the “actual” out of the “possible.” The egg and the seed are instances of the “possible,” the fowl and the flower of the “actual.” But there must always have been a fowl before there was an egg, and a flower before there was a seed. Therefore the actual must always have been first; and if this be the case with particular classes of things, we cannot conceive that the whole world was ever non-existent, and a mere possibility waiting to be called into existence (‘Metaphys.’ VIII. viii.)

Philosophers always acknowledge the difficulty which there is in conceiving a *beginning*. Aristotle escapes this difficulty by asserting that the Universe has existed eternally the same as it appears to us now. He says that there is only one Cosmos or Universe,

and that outside of this there is "neither space, nor vacuum, nor time." One would expect these words to mean that the Universe extends to infinity in all directions; but, on the other hand, Aristotle attributes a definite circular shape to the "outside" of the Universe, which would be incompatible with the idea of infinite extension. In fact, his arguments to prove the above untenable position are curious abstract quibbles, which may be quoted to show how oddly a philosopher of the 4th century B.C. could reason on the physical construction of the Universe. He says ('On the Heavens,' I. ix.) that there can be neither space nor vacuum outside the circumference of the Cosmos, for, if there were, then body might be placed therein; but this is impossible, because every physical body is naturally endowed with one of three motions: it is either naturally centripetal, or naturally centrifugal, or naturally revolving round the earth. Now each of these three kinds of body has its natural place within the Universe; the stone being centripetal has its natural place on or in the earth; fire being centrifugal has its natural place above the air; the stars which revolve have their natural place in the revolving Heaven. Thus there is no kind of body which can naturally exist outside the Universe, and therefore there can be no Space, for Space is that in which bodies exist! That there is no Time beyond the limits of the Universe, Aristotle proves by the more legitimate argument that "if there is no motion there can be no time, since Time is the measure of motion." But his conception of the "natural" motions inherent

in different classes of bodies, and his appeal to his own preconceived ideas of "nature" to prove what exists, or does not exist, outside the circumference of Heaven, are very characteristic.

Time and Space, then, according to Aristotle, and with the circumference of Heaven, though it is difficult to understand how space can be conceived to come to an end at any particular point. But the Stoicite here becomes mystical, for he says that, "the things outside," existing in neither space nor time, enjoy for all eternity a perfect life of absolute joy and peace ('Heavens,' l. ix.) This is the region of the divine, in which there is life and consciousness, though perhaps no personality; it is increate, immutable, and indestructible.

Descending from this region—if that can be called *region* which is out of space altogether—we come in the Aristotelian system to the "First Heaven," the place of the fixed stars, which ever revolves with great velocity from the left to the right. In a lower sphere, revolving in the contrary direction, are the sun, moon, and planets; and we are told that we must not suppose that either stars or planets are composed of fire. Their substance is ether, that fifth element, or *quinta essentia*, which enters also into the composition of the human soul. They only seem bright, like fire, because the friction caused by the rapidity with which they are carried round makes them red-hot. The reason why the stars twinkle, but the planets do not, is merely that the former are so far off that our sight reaches them in a weak and trembling condition; hence their light

seems to us to quiver, while really it is our eyesight which is quivering. Sun, moon, and stars alike are living beings, unwearied, and in the enjoyment of perfect happiness.

It has often been said that if an ancient Greek temple be compared with a Gothic cathedral, the one suggests the idea of the finite, the other of the infinite. The same thing might be said of Aristotle's Cosmology when compared with the views of modern science. Aristotle figured to himself a perfectly limited universe, with the earth in the centre, and the fixed stars all round the circumference. In a circle, or globe, it may be questioned which is the place of honour—the centre or the circumference. The Pythagoreans, accordingly, after the abstract method of those times, declared that the centre must be the most honourable position, and that, as the element fire is more honourable than the element earth, the centre of the Universe must be occupied by some Central Fire, and that the earth must revolve round this like the other stars. Aristotle, unconscious how much nearer to the truth this guess was than his own, laughs at it as the production of men "who try to square facts to their own fancies, and who wish to have a share in the arrangement of the Universe." He also repudiates ('Heavens,' II. xiv. 1) the theory of Plato that the earth is packed round the axis of the entire Universe and revolves with it, thus causing day and night.* He maintains that the earth is the motionless

* There is some doubt as to what Plato's theory actually was. See 'Minor Works of George Grote,' vol. i. pp. 239-275, and Professor Jowett's Introduction to the 'Timæus' of Plato.

centre, but the least honourable member, of the Universe, the all-embracing circumference being the most noble, and the heavenly bodies having a dignity in inverse ratio to their approach towards the centre. The guesses, or intuitions, of the ancient Greeks in Aristotle's time, or soon afterwards, hit upon something very like an anticipation of the Copernican system. And this was especially the case with Aristarchus of Samos, who announced the double movement of the earth, round its own axis and round the sun. But Aristotle certainly contributed nothing towards the adoption of such ideas. He unfortunately committed himself, on fancied grounds of symmetry, to an opposite view.

Aristotle argued that if the earth were to move it could only do so "unnaturally," by the application of external force in contradiction to its own natural tendency to rest round the centre, and that no such forced movement could be kept up for ever, whereas the arrangements of the Cosmos must be for all eternity. Therefore the earth must be at rest! As to its shape, Aristotle was more correct: he proved it to be spherical — (1) by the consideration that all heavy bodies are by nature always tending to the centre, and that this process must result in the production of a spherical mass; (2) by the fact that the earth's shadow cast on the moon in an eclipse is circular. He considered the bulk of the earth to be small when compared with that of "the other stars;" he accepts the calculations of the geometers of his time that its circumference was 400,000 stades; and he says that "we must not treat with incredulity the opinion of those who say that

the regions near the Pillars of Hercules (or Straits of Gibraltar) join on to India, and that the ocean to the east of India and that to the west of Europe are one and the same." In support of this proposition he adduces the fact that elephants are to be found on each side, *i.e.*, in India and in Africa ('Heavens,' II. xiv. 15). The passage of Aristotle here quoted had a large share in inflaming the imagination of Christopher Columbus, and in sending him forth from the coasts of Spain in search of the coasts of India; and it was the cause of the islands of Central America being named the "West Indies," and the *aborigines* of North America being called "Red Indians." As an approximative guess at the size and figure of the earth, the passage in question was not a bad one, considering the time when it was written; but curiously enough it contains two errors, the first of which would imply the earth to be a great deal larger, and the second a great deal smaller, than it really is. The mean geographical stade of the Greeks is computed at 168 yards 1 foot and 6 inches, and thus if 400,000 stades be assigned to the circumference of the earth, we get a measurement of above 38,000 miles, whereas the latest calculations would only give about 24,857 miles for a mean circumference of the earth. Thus evidently the geometers of the time of Aristotle were too liberal in their ideas of the earth's size. But, on the other hand, those who identified the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean, and brought India opposite to Spain, had evidently too contracted a notion of the contents of our globe.

Owing to the absence of astronomical instruments,

and the generally inferior condition of physical science in the fifth century B.C., it was only natural that the *a priori* method, or guessing, should greatly predominate in the cosmoical theories of that time. But Aristotle's strength did not lie in his imagination. In this faculty he was inferior to other philosophers when in analytical power he far surpassed. Thus Alexander von Humboldt says of him ('Cosmos,' vol. i. note 48), "the great influence which the writings of Aristotle exercised on the whole of the Middle Ages, renders it a cause of extreme regret that he should have been so opposed to the grander and juster views of the fabric of the universe entertained by the more ancient Pythagorean school." There was, in fact, a want of sublimity in the fancy of Aristotle, and it so happened that he sometimes contemptuously rejected hypotheses which were not only more beautiful, but more true, than his own. We have seen that this was the case with regard to the earth's position in the cosmoical system. And the same thing occurred as to the nature of comets. The Pythagoreans had declared comets to be "planets of long revolution;" but Aristotle, rejecting this supposition, affirmed them to be transient meteors of our atmosphere, formed out of luminous or incandescent matter which had been thrown off by the stars. And to explain the reason why comets are so rare, he said that the matter out of which they are composed is completely used up in forming the Milky Way. ('Meteorol.' l. viii.) "The nebulous belt, then, which traverses the vault of the heavens, is regarded by the

Stagirite as an immense comet incessantly reproducing itself."

Clearly, Aristotle's contribution to Natural Philosophy did not consist in suggesting or leading the way to true views as to the nature and arrangement of the heavenly bodies. He not only was not in advance of his age in this respect, but was even behind it, in so far as he refused to adopt theories, which have since turned out to have been anticipations of the results of modern science. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that those theories were incapable of verification at the time, and had no force in themselves to command the attention of the world. They were like the "false dawn" in tropical countries, which appears for a few minutes and then fades away, allowing the darkness again to reign supreme, till the true sunrise takes place. Unconvinced by the speculations of the Pythagorean school and of Aristarchus of Samos, the great Alexandrian astronomer, Ptolemy, in the second century of our era, reaffirmed the Aristotelian views as to the spherical form and motion of the heavens, as to the earth's position in the centre of the heavens, and as to its being devoid of any motion of translation. And the Ptolemaic system satisfied men's minds until, with Copernicus and Galileo, modern astronomy began.

We must allow that Aristotle's cosmical ideas were erroneous and misleading. Still we must take them as constituting a mere fraction of his encyclopædia of philosophy, and we must recollect that they are put forth in works which laid out and constituted new sciences.

This was the Stagirite's achievement,—the clear analytic separation of the different sciences, and the statement, in outline at all events, of the questions which each science had to answer. Aristotle generally attempted to furnish his own answer to these questions, and often gave wrong answers; yet to have posed the questions at all was a great matter, and cleared the way for the thoughts of subsequent generations. There is no one to whose work the saying is more appropriate than to that of the Stagirite—*quæritur quæritur de divinis sciens-
tæ est*—"It is half way to knowledge when you know what you have to inquire."

The leading questions started in the Natural Philosophy of Aristotle are as to the nature of causation, time, space, and motion. On the subject of motion he went astray by taking up the idea that celestial and terrestrial motions were different in kind—that the heavenly bodies "naturally" revolved, while bodies on earth had each a natural motion in them, either downward or upward. This belief in the absolute levity of certain bodies—as, for instance, fire—was, of course, a mistake. "Truth is the daughter of Time;" and a few of the great discoveries of modern ages, which appear so simple, though they were so hardly and so late achieved,—such as the Copernican system, and the law of gravitation, have shattered the Cosmos of Aristotle. Still it required at least fifteen centuries before anything like a demonstration was brought against the reality of that Cosmos and its arrangements. Thus, if Aristotle be censured for the incorrectness of his theories, succeeding generations of thinkers

for so long a period must also be held responsible for their undoubting acceptance of them.

Aristotle's method in *Physics*, as in most other subjects, consisted in this: he first endeavoured to state clearly to himself what was the problem which he had before him, then he collected all the solutions of that problem which had been proposed by his predecessors, and all popular "sayings" and "notions" in regard to it, and then he examined existing opinions by the light of such facts as occurred to him, or which had been previously collected by him, or else he applied logical reasonings and general philosophical considerations in pronouncing upon the validity of the theories of others. A main part of the process consisted in starting ingenious difficulties to the theories in question, so that they seldom came through the ordeal without being wholly exploded or considerably modified. The residuum left, or the new result arrived at, constituted the theory of Aristotle. Such is not the procedure by which discoveries are made, knowledge increased, and the boundaries of science extended, in modern times. But after all, it was not a bad procedure for a man who was writing an encyclopædia. Aristotle had undertaken to set forth every department of knowledge revised and perfected, so far as possible, by the aid of stores of information and thought which he had laid up. In some departments he was much stronger than others: in *Politics*, *Sociology*, *Psychology*, and *Natural History*, he had a far better array of facts than in *Astronomy* and *Mechanics*. No one could be keener than he was to make facts the basis of every theory; but he was

obliged to do the best he could in each case with his materials. He set out all that was known or believed on each subject, and added to the knowledge or criticised the beliefs as well as he could. The real aids for the advance and verification of science which exist in modern times—*instruments*, such as the telescope, the microscope, the barometer, the thermometer, the spectroscope, and countless others; the knowledge of many great laws of nature; and the practice of accurately observing and carefully recording, — were all wanting in the days of Aristotle. Therefore it is absurd to treat him as if he had been a modern man of science, with a vicious method. It may be called a mistake that he attempted so much; still what he accomplished was wonderful if we merely regard it as a map of the Sciences belonging to the 4th century B.C., full of his own additions and improvements.

There is one great science of modern days which Aristotle failed to anticipate, or to hint at, or in any way to foreshadow—and that is the science of Chemistry. Some erroneously spell this word “chymistry” as though it were derived from the Greek *chymos*,* a juice, and as though it had been known to the Greeks. But of course “chemistry” comes from the Semitic word *Chem* (which is the same as “Ham,” the son of Noah), meaning “black,” and then “Egyptian.” And thus

* Aristotle, in treating of the sense of Taste, gives an enumeration of different flavours, and then says, “The other properties of juices form a proper subject for inquiry in connection with the physiology of plants.” Thus by “juices” he means vegetable fluids, to be treated of from the point of view of Botany or of *Materia Medica*.

Chemistry is the black or Egyptian art, having taken its rise out of the searches made by the Alchemists to discover the philosopher's stone. Aristotle had no notion whatever of the rich field of knowledge and power which lay in the analysis of substances. He had no idea of the composition of water or air. The crucible and the retort had never been worked in Athens; the most superficial guess-work, as to what we should call the chemical properties of bodies, contented the philosophers of the day. Aristotle's work 'On Generation and Corruption' would have been the appropriate place for enunciating some of the laws of Chemistry; but he does not go beyond a resolution of the "Four Elements" into the ultimate principles of the Hot, the Cold, the Wet, and the Dry — the first pair being "active" and the second "passive" principles. Hot and Wet, we are told, form Air; Hot and Dry, Fire; Cold and Wet, Water; Cold and Dry, Earth. From these principles Aristotle deduces the generation and destruction of physical bodies; but on the details of a theory which now seems puerile we need not dwell.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BIOLOGY OF ARISTOTLE.

THE word "Biology" is perhaps only about fifty years old, having first come into prominent use in the 'Positive Philosophy' of Auguste Comte. It is now quite naturalised in the vocabulary of science; and there is an article on "Biology," by Professor Huxley, in the recently published edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' which begins, "The Biological sciences are those which deal with the phenomena manifested by living matter." Yet still, in the eyes of a scholar this modern compound is an unfortunate one. The Greeks had two words for life, *Zoë* and *Bios*: the former expressed life viewed from the inside, as it were—the vital principle, the functions of life, the sense of living; the latter expressed the external form and manner of living, such as a man's profession or career. *Zoë* was applicable to the whole animated kingdom; *Bios* was restricted to man, except so far as, half metaphorically, it was applied to the habits of beasts or birds. Thus Aristotle divided *Zoë* into the species "vegetable," "animal," and "human;" but *Bios* into the species "life of pleasure," "life of ambition," and "life of

thought." From all this, it will be seen that "Biology" could not be used to denote a science of the phenomena of living matter in general, without a sacrifice of ancient Greek associations. "Biology," in short, is more appropriate to express what we generally call Sociology; and, on the other hand, "Zoölogy" should have been used to express what is now called "Biology." But the fact was, that the word "Zoölogy" (derived from *Zöon*, an animal, not from *Zöô*, life) had been already appropriated as a name for natural history. Hence, without regard to classical propriety, the word "Biology" was forced into service to meet a want, and to express, what had never been expressed before, the science of life in all its manifestations from the lowest ascidian up to the highest development of humanity, so far as that development can be considered to be a natural evolution out of the physiological laws of life.

Aristotle had no word to express this comprehensive idea, but assuredly he had the idea itself. He regards the whole of nature as a continuous chain, even beginning with inorganic substances and passing by imperceptible gradations on to organisms, to the vegetable, and to the zoophyte, and then to the animal and the various ranks in the animal kingdom, and lastly to man ('Researches about Animals,' VIII. i. 4), "whose soul in childhood, you might say, differs not from the soul of the lower animals." This broad comprehensive sweep of the philosophic eye through the realms of nature, this finding of unity in such endless diversity, this tracing of a continuous thread throughout the ascending scale of life, may seem quite a matter of

course to educated persons of the present day. But it was creditable to Aristotle to have so fully arrived at and entertained this conception, and to have set it forth in such firmly-drawn scientific outlines. Above all, it was creditable to one who, though born of the race of Esculapius (see above, p. 3), had been trained as a dialectician and an orator, and had devoted so much time and labour to the sciences connected with words and thoughts, that he should have had the force and versatility to act also as pioneer into a totally different range of inquiries, and to collect such a mass of facts wherewith to fill in his general sketch of animated nature. It is probable that at all periods of his life his studies, observations, and notes upon matters of physical and natural science, ran on side by side with his development of mental and moral philosophy. Some have thought that the period of his residence at the Court of Macedonia, when acting as tutor to Alexander, afforded him peculiar facilities, in the shape of royal menageries and hunters and fowlers under his command, for the collection of materials for his great work on animals. However this may be, there seems no sufficient reason for taking that work itself out of the list of those which were on the stocks and more or less completed during the last thirteen years of his life.

Aristotle's Biological treatises, as briefly specified above (p. 47), consist (1) of the work "On the Parts of Animals," which contains a distinction still valid in physiology between "tissues" and "organs," or as Aristotle calls them, "homogeneous" and "unhome-

geneous" substances. He traces here, according to his own ideas, the ascent from the inorganic to the organic world: out of heat, cold, wetness, and dryness the four elements are compounded; out of the four elements are formed the homogeneous substances or tissues; out of these are formed the organs, and out of the organs the organised being. All this served as a provisional theory, until superseded by the discoveries of chemistry. Aristotle laid it down as a principle of method ('Parts of An.,' I. i. 4), that all which was common to the various species of living beings should be discussed before entering upon their specific differences. Therefore (2) the treatise 'On the Soul' followed next in order, and traced out the vital principle through its successive ascending manifestations. To this was appended (3) the 'Parva Naturalia' or 'Physiological Tracts,' which dealt with some of the functions of living creatures, whether common or special, such as sensation, memory, dreaming, and also with the following pairs of opposites: waking and sleeping, youth and old age, inspiration and expiration, life and death. It was added that there is another pair still to be treated of—namely, health and sickness. The Stagirite, as was natural from his family traditions, always appears to have looked forward to composing a philosophical work on Medicine. But there is no trace of this ever having been achieved.

The 4th book on the list kept still to generalities. This was the short treatise 'On the Locomotion of Animals,' which showed how various organs in the various creatures are adapted by nature for this pur-

pose. Next (5) the elaborate treatise 'On the Generation of Animals' worked out this subject, illustrating it with a wonderfully copious collection of facts, or supposed facts, and of the opinions of the day; and, lastly (6), the great treatise entitled 'Researches about Animals,' formed, as it were, the conclusion of the whole, by giving detailed observations upon many of the various living creatures which are the products of the working of nature's general laws.

Aristotle justly drew a distinction between the way in which any phenomenon of nature would be considered and defined by a dialectician and by a physicist. Thus he says ('On the Soul,' I. i. 16): "Anger would be defined by a dialectician to be 'a desire for retaliation,' or something of the kind. By a physical philosopher it would be defined as 'a boiling up of the hot blood about the heart.'" It is needless to say that the Stagiraite himself was great and unvalled in his dialectical definitions, — those definitions which depended on grasping the essence of facts which are patent to all ages alike; while in his physical definitions, being destitute of facts which only later ages have brought to light, he was very imperfect and occasionally almost absurd. As a specimen of this we may mention his account of the vital principle or life, from the two points of view. He defines the vital principle ('Soul,' II. i. 6) to be "the essential actuality of an organism;" and this definition has met with high praise from modern physiologists, some of whom, indeed, appear simply to have repeated it in slightly different words. Thus Duges defines life as "the special activity of

organised bodies ;” and Beclard calls it “organisation in action.”* The merit of Aristotle’s definition, as coming from an ancient Greek philosopher, consists in its avoiding the view which would have been natural in those times—namely, that life, the vital principle or the physical soul, was a separate entity, dwelling in the body, *hospes comesque corporis*, “the body’s guest and friend,” as the Emperor Hadrian called it in his dying verses. Aristotle said that life, or the soul, is not a chance guest, but a function ; it is to the body as sight is to the eye ; it is the perfect action of all the conditions of the bodily organisation. Thus the Pythagoreans spoke vainly when they talked of the “transmigration of souls,” as if the soul of a man could migrate into the body of a beast. “You might as well,” said Aristotle, “speak of the carpenter’s art (which is the result of the carpenter’s tools) migrating into flutes, which are the tools of the musician.”

So much for his dialectical, or speculative, views of life. The following are some of his opinions in detail on the same subject, from a physical point of view, taken from the ‘Physiological Tracts :’—The primary condition of life is the “natural fire” which resides in the heart of each living creature. This fire may be extinguished by contrary forces, or smothered by excess of heat. Respiration is the process of cooling, which prevents the smothering of the vital fire. Animals require two things for existence—food and

* These definitions are quoted in Bennett’s ‘Text-book of Physiology,’ p. 184. See also Mr G. H. Lewes’s ‘Aristotle, a Page from the History of Science,’ p. 230.

cooling. The mouth serves for both purposes, except in the case of fishes,* who get their cooling not by air through the lungs, but by water through the gills. The heart is placed in the middle region of the body, and is not only the seat of life, but also of intelligence; it is the first formed of all the parts. The brain is the coldest and wettest part of the body, and serves conjointly with the respiration in bringing down the fire of life. Three of the senses—sight, sound, and smell—are located in the brain; touch and taste reside in the heart, which also contains the “common sensillum,” or faculty of complex perceptions, such as figure, size, motion, and number. The heart takes the blood and sends it out by the “veins” to all parts of the body (of course Aristotle was ignorant of the return of the blood to the heart, and therefore made no distinction between veins and arteries). Adequate warmth being the condition of life, the inhabitants of hot countries are longer-lived than those of cold countries; and men are longer-lived than women. But as cooling also is required, people with large heads, as a rule, live long.

It is hardly necessary to say that every opinion above mentioned is mistaken, and almost every statement of fact erroneous. Aristotle, however, is not solely responsible for the doctrines, for he doubtless inherited his ideas of anatomy and physiology from Hippocrates and his father Nicomachus, and, in short,

* Aristotle rejects the (true) opinion of Anaxagoras and Diogenes that fishes get air out of the water which they draw through their gills, and that they are suffocated when out of the water because the air comes to them in too large quantities.

from his Greek predecessors. He neither did, nor could, create the whole of physiology afresh, as he created the whole science of logic. This shows the difference between a science that is simple and abstract, being dependent on a few laws of the human mind, and a science which is infinitely complex, being dependent on facts which have only gradually been discovered up to a certain point during the long lapse of centuries, with the aid of instruments which were unknown to the ancients. But Aristotle had distinctly the idea of the advance of physiology and medicine by means of the study of nature. He said, "Physical philosophy leads to medical deductions, the best doctors seek grounds for their art in nature." Perhaps from this sentence, at all events from the notion contained in it, the word "physician" has come to be appropriated in modern times by the practitioners of medicine.

Unfortunately, Aristotle not unfrequently applied dialectical reasonings to questions of physiology when they were quite inappropriate. For instance, arguing against Plato's theory of respiration — namely, that breathing results from the impact upon us of the external atmosphere following upon the disturbance which is caused by the expiration of warm air — he says that this would imply expiration to be the first of the two operations; but they alternate, and expiration is the last, *therefore* inspiration must be the first! Again, he mentions the opinion of those who said that the senses correspond with the four elements, and that sight is fire, trying to prove it by the fact that if the

eye be struck sparks are seen. Aristotle, however, says that this fact is to be explained in another way : the iris of the eye shines like a phosphorescent substance ; when the eye is struck, the sudden shock of the blow causes the eye as an object of vision to become separate from the eye as the organ of vision, and thus the eye for an instant sees itself ! Again, he says that the "white" of the eye is mucinous, which prevents the watery vehicle that conveys the sight from getting frozen ; the eye is less liable to freeze than any part of the body !

Turning from these curiosities of an old world physiology, let us glance at the natural history of Aristotle. There is something peculiar and Aristotelian about the very terms "Natural History." They arise out of a mistranslation of the title of Aristotle's work, 'Histories about Animals,' where "Histories" is used in its primitive sense of "investigations" or "researches." But the title has been translated *História Animalium*, or 'History of Animals,' and from this the modern phrase "Natural History" has doubtless got crystallised into its present signification. Looking to the contents of the treatise in question, we perceive that to a great part of it the shorter form of the word "Histories" would have been applicable, as consisting rather of "Stories about Animals" than of any very profound investigations with regard to them. It is probable that a large proportion of what is here recorded came to Aristotle orally ; and that, too, not from *savants*, but from uneducated classes of people whose occupations had put them in the way of observing the habits of

certain species — such people as fishermen, sailors, sponge-divers, fowlers, hunters, herdsmen, bee-keepers, and the like. We know how difficult it is to get pure fact, unalloyed by fancy, from informants of this kind; and therefore it is no wonder that Aristotle, in compiling the first treatise on Natural History that was ever written, and in collecting his materials by inquiry made at first or second hand from the working classes, should have admitted many a “yarn” and many a “traveller’s tale” into his pages. The subject was too new to admit of his being able by instinctive sagacity to reject the improbable; a judgment of that kind is only attained by one who possesses a vast stock of well ascertained facts, and by unconscious analogy can argue from the known to the unknown. In many cases Aristotle shows himself almost as simple as old Herodotus, with his tales of the phoenix and other marvels.

The following may be quoted as one instance out of many of the *noircté* of the Stagirite (‘Animals,’ IX. xlviii.): “Among marine animals there are many instances recorded of the mild, gentle disposition of the dolphin, and of its love of its children, and its affection, in the neighbourhood of Tarentum, Caria, and other places. It is said that when a dolphin was captured and wounded on the coast of Caria, a great multitude of dolphins came into the harbour, until the fisherman let him go, when they all went away together. And one large dolphin always follows the little ones to take care of them. And sometimes a shoal of large and small dolphins has been seen to-

gether, and two of these having been left behind have appeared soon after supporting and carrying on their back a small dead dolphin that was on the point of sinking, as if in pity for it, that it might not be devoured by any other creature. Incredible things are told of the swiftness of the dolphin, which appears to be the swiftest of all animals whether marine or terrestrial. They even leap over the masts of large ships. This is especially the case when they pursue a fish for the sake of food; for if it flies from them they will pursue it, from lenger, into the depths of the sea. And when they have to return from a great depth, they hold in their breath, as if calculating the distance, and gathering themselves up they shoot forward like an arrow, wishing with all speed to accomplish the distance to their breathing place. And if a ship happen to be in the way, they will leap over its masts. The males and females live in pairs with each other. There is some doubt why they cast themselves on shore, for it is said that they do this at times without any apparent reason."

The freshness of spirit which breathes through this passage characterises the whole of Aristotle's treatise, which, in spite of its sometimes reminding us of the "showman" of modern times, has excited the enthusiastic admiration of several great authorities. Cuvier says, "I cannot read this work without being ravished with a sentiment. Indeed it is impossible to conceive how a single man was able to collect and compare the multitude of particular facts implied in the numerous rules and aphorisms which are contained

in this book." Buffon, De Blainville, St Hilaire, and others,* have used similar terms of eulogy. One modern zoologist, Professor Sundevall of Stockholm, has reckoned up the number of species with which Aristotle showed himself to be more or less acquainted, and he finds them to amount to nearly 500, — the total number of mammals described or indicated being about 70; of birds 150; of reptiles 20; and of fishes 116 — making altogether 356 species of vertebrate animals. Of the invertebrate classes about 60 species of insects and arachnids seem to have been known to Aristotle; some 24 crustaceans and annelids; and about 40 molluses and radiates.† At the same time, it must be remembered that Aristotle had no idea of the scientific system of classification which appears in Professor Sundevall's list. He does not seem to have laboured much at the arrangement of living creatures into natural orders; indeed he could not have succeeded in such an attempt, for want of a sufficient knowledge of anatomy. He was content with the superficial, universally-received, grouping of animals, as walking, creeping, flying, or swimming; as oviparous or viviparous; aquatic or terrestrial; and the like. His book contains a mass of materials, but without much methodic arrangement or trace of system. It pointed the way, however, for his successors to a science of zoology.

The facts given by him of course vary extremely in correctness and in value. In his account of sponges,

* Quoted by Mr G. H. Lewes in his 'Aristotle,' p. 270.

† See 'The Natural History Review' for 1864, p. 494.

for instance, Aristotle is thought to have shown sound information, probably derived from the reports of the professional divers. But his statements about bees, though obtained, as he tells us, from bee-keepers, and though "made beautiful for ever" in the charming verses of Virgil's fourth *Georgic*, have been quite overturned by the microscopic discoveries of Beaumont, Hunter, Huber, Keys, Viest, and Dufour. On one cardinal point the ancients were all wrong: they did not understand the sex and the functions of either the queen-bee, the worker, or the drone.

The following account of the lion is considered to be fairly correct (*Ann.* IX. xlvii.): "When feeding, the lion is extremely savage; but when he is not hungry and is full fed, he is quite gentle. He is not either jealous or suspicious. He is playful and affectionate towards those animals which have been brought up with him, and to which he is accustomed. When hunted, so long as he is in view he never flies or cowers; and if compelled to give way by the number of his hunters, he retreats leisurely, at a walk, turning himself round at short intervals. But if he reaches a covert he flies rapidly, until he is in the open again, and then he again retreats at a walk. If compelled to fly when on the open plains, he runs at full stretch, but does not leap. His manner of running is continuous, like that of a dog at full stretch; when pursuing his prey, however, he throws himself upon it when he comes within reach. It is true what they say about the lion being very much afraid of fire (as Homer wrote, 'the blazing fagots, that his courage daunt'), and about his watching and singling out for attack

the person who has struck him. But when any one misses hitting him and only annoys him, if in his rush he succeeds in catching that person, he does not harm him nor wound him with his claws, but shakes and frightens him and then leaves him. Lions are more disposed to enter towns and attack mankind when they have grown old, because old age renders them unable to hunt, and because of the decay of their teeth. They live many years; and in the case of a lame lion who was captured, he had many of his teeth worn down, which some considered a sign that lions live long, for this could not have happened to an animal who was not aged."

The 'Researches about Animals,' like many other of Aristotle's great treatises, appears to have been left in an unfinished state. The tenth book seems merely to be a sort of fragmentary continuation of the seventh book—both treating of the reproduction of the human species. In the ten books as they have come down to us, no one can pretend to find a finished whole. It is a question, therefore, whether the work was ever published in Aristotle's lifetime, or whether it ever got, in its present form, to the Alexandrian Library. In the Alexandrian Catalogue, indeed, there is mention of a work entitled 'Animals' in nine books. But this may have been a set of excerpts by some Peripatetic scholar; we cannot tell what its exact relation to "*Our Aristotle*" may have been. There is some little interest in the question, on account of the influence that Aristotle is supposed to have exercised on the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which was begun at Alexandria 285 B.C.—that is to say, just after Aristotle's

MSS had been carried off to Asia Minor. It has been conjectured that the Septuagint translators, in rendering the Hebrew word *chaww* (*חָוָה*) by the Greek word *desypnos* (*δυσπνοια*), instead of by the word *hans*, which had been usual in earlier classical Greek, were following a new fashion set by Aristotle in his 'Researches about Animals,' in which work "the modern word *desypnos* had almost entirely superseded the older."* And it is added that "there was an even yet more striking example of Aristotle's influence on the passage" (Leviticus, xi. 6) : for whereas in the original Hebrew text the hare was said to chew the cud, the translators, having been enlightened by the natural history of Aristotle, "boldly interpolated the word NOT into the sacred text." The facts of the case are—that Aristotle's *desypnos* for *hans* 'inadvertently with, and nearly as often as, *desypnos* ; and that in one passage ('*An.* III. xxi. 1) he cursorily contrasts the hare with the class of ruminants. On the whole, then, it seems most natural to believe that the Septuagint translators used the word *desypnos* because it had become the fashion in speaking Greek to use it, and that Aristotle himself had obeyed and not created this fashion. With regard to the other point, it is quite possible that the translators may have seen that passage of Aristotle's above referred to ; at all events, as educated men, they were doubtless influenced by the spread of the study of natural history, to which Aristotle, who had died only thirty seven years before, had given great impetus.

* Dean Stanley's 'Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church,' iii. 261.

CHAPTER IX.

THE METAPHYSICS OF ARISTOTLE.

SOME of Aristotle's earliest attempts at writing were on a strictly metaphysical subject, when he attacked the Platonic doctrine of "Ideas." He doubtless went on from this beginning, and thought of metaphysical questions all his life, till he had framed for himself a more or less complete metaphysical system, traces of which show themselves in many forms of expression and leading thoughts in all his various scientific works. But it seems as if he had put off to the last the undertaking of a direct and complete exposition of that system; and hence arose the name "Metaphysics," which is a mere title signifying "the things which follow after physics"—a title given by Aristotle's school to a mass of papers which they edited after his death, and with regard to which they wished to indicate that chronologically these papers were composed *after* the physical treatises, and also, perhaps, that the subject of which they treated was *above** and *beyond* the mere physical conditions of *things*. The word "Meta-

* Thus Shakespeare speaks of "Fate and *metaphysical* aid," meaning "supernatural."

physics," starting from this fortuitous origin, has come to be generally understood in modern times as denoting the most abstract of the sciences—the science of the forms of thought and the forms of things, the science of knowing and being, the science that answers the questions, How can we know anything? How can anything exist? Aristotle, who, of course, was himself unconscious of the word "Metaphysics," had three names which he used indifferently for this science. Sometimes he called it simply "Wisdom;" sometimes "First Philosophy," as treating of primary substances and the origin of things; sometimes "Theology," because all things have their root in the divine nature.

We have already had some specimens of Aristotle's metaphysical doctrines, put forward as a foundation for natural philosophy (see above, p. 132). In his biological treatises also, especially in that 'On the Soul,' Aristotle does not confine himself to the physical principle of life and the functions of the animal soul, but enters upon the mode of our acquiring knowledge, on perception, memory, reason, and the relation of the mind to external objects—all being questions which encroach upon the province of metaphysical inquiry. The substantive treatise, bearing the name 'Metaphysics,' has come down to us in the shape of a posthumous fragment, which has been edited and eked out by the addition of other papers. The whole work, as it stands, consists of thirteen books. Of these, seven books were written by Aristotle as the setting forth of his ontology, or science of existence; Books IX., XII., and XIII. (on the Pythagorean and Platonic systems

of numbers and ideas) seem to have been intended to come in as part of the same treatise, but to have been left by Aristotle in the condition of mere notes or materials; Book XI. is thought to be a separate, though very valuable and interesting, essay on the nature of the Deity; while Books IV. and X., and the appendix to Book I., are un-Aristotelian,* and should never have had a place assigned to them in the '*Metaphysics*.'

To turn to this work from the '*Researches about Animals*' is like turning from White's '*Selborne*' to Kant's '*Critic of the Pure Reason*.' Metaphysical questions are necessarily abstruse, dry, and difficult; but the attempt has sometimes been made—as, for instance, by Plato, Berkeley, Hume, and Ferrier—to discuss them in clear, pointed language, as little as possible removed from the ordinary language of literature. Aristotle, on the other hand, at all events in later life, aimed only at scientific precision; and his '*Metaphysics*' is the forerunner of those German philosophies which from beginning to end exhibit a jargon of technical phraseology. In another respect, also, Aristotle here sets an example which has been much followed by the Germans during the present century; for in Book I. he gives a "history of philosophy" from Thales down to himself. This is a very

* Book IV. consists of a list of philosophical terms and their definitions, perhaps jotted down by some scholar. Book X. is a paraphrase of part of the '*Physical Discourse*.' The appendix to Book I. is a little essay on First Principles, of which tradition attributes the authorship to one Pasides.

interesting little sketch, disclosing for the first time the fact that human thought has a history, and that there was a time when the word "cause," for instance, had never been heard, and pointing to the conclusion that every abstract word which we use is the result of the theories, and perhaps the controversies, of former ages. Aristotle traces the thoughts of successive Grecian thinkers, advancing under a law, while each stage at which they arrived forced them on to the next (see 'Met.,' I., iii. 11), from about 600 B.C. to about 330 B.C. And this task had never been again so well accomplished until Hegel gave his first set of lectures on the History of Philosophy, at Jena, in 1805. Hegel was followed in the same field by Brandis, Schweigler, Ueberwey, Cousin, Renouvier, Ferrier, Zeller, and many others, to whose works we must refer for information as to the Greek philosophers. Suffice it to say, that Aristotle's method of procedure is to take his own doctrine of the Four Causes (see above, p. 72), and to show how at first philosophers only got hold of the idea of a Material Cause, and that afterwards they gradually arrived at the idea of Motive Power, Form, and End, or Final Cause. On the whole, his brief and masterly sketch, while full of points of light, is open to the charge of not doing sufficient justice to the views of his predecessors. Among them all, he seems most highly to appreciate Anaxagoras, of whom he says that, by introducing the idea of Reason among the causes of the existence of the world, he was "like a sober man beginning to speak amidst a party of drunkards." Aristotle repeats

here his old polemic against what he calls the system of Plato, though it is doubtful whether Plato would himself have acknowledged it. One would almost say that Aristotle misstated Plato in order to refute him.

The same fate, as if by way of reprisal, has often in modern times befallen the Stagirite, who has repeatedly been misstated, and then censured for what he never had maintained. At the risk, however, of committing fresh injustices of this sort, we will endeavour briefly to sum up his views upon some of the greatest questions which have occupied modern philosophers. First, then, we may ask how would Aristotle have dealt with those problems concerning the existence of Matter, and the reality of the External World, which have been a "shibboleth" in the philosophic world from Bishop Berkeley, through the days of Hume and the Scotch psychologists, down to Kant and Hegel and the extreme idealists of Germany? His utterances on this subject are perhaps chiefly to be found in the third book of his treatise 'On the Soul,' beginning with the fourth chapter. On turning to them we see that he never separates existence from knowledge. "A thing in actual existence," he says, "is identical with the knowledge of that thing." Again—"The possible existence of a thing is identical with the possibility in us of perceiving or knowing it." Thus, until a thing is perceived or known, it can only be said to have a potential or possible existence. And from this a doctrine very similar to that of Ferrier might be deduced, that "nothing exists except *plus me*"—that is to say, in relation to some mind perceiving it. Aris-

totle indicates, without fully explaining, his doctrine of the relation of the mind to external things in a celebrated passage (*"Soul,"* iii. v.) where he says that there are two kinds of Reason in the soul—the one passive, the other constructive. "The passive Reason *becomes* all things by receiving their impress; the constructive Reason *creates* all things, just as light brings colours into actual existence, while without light they would have remained mere possibilities." Aristotle, then, appears to be removed from the "common-sense" doctrine of "natural realism," which believes that the world would be just what we perceive to be, even if there were no one to perceive it; for, by his analogy, the mind contributes as much to the existence of things as light does to colour; and he is equally removed from that extreme idealism which would represent things to be merely the thoughts of a mind, for he evidently considers that there is a "notion"—a factor in all existence and knowledge—which is outside of the mind, and which may be taken to be symbolised by all the constituents of colour, except light: the mind, according to him, contributes only what light does to colour; all else is external to the mind, though without the mind nothing could attain to actuality. The external world, then, according to Aristotle, is a perfectly real existence, but it is the product of two sets of factors—the one being the rich and varied constituents of the universe, the other being Reason manifested in perceiving minds; and, without the presence and co-operation of this perceptive Reason, all things would be at once condemned to virtual annihilation.

As to Matter, Aristotle called it "timber," or "the underlying," to indicate that it is to existence as wood is to a table, and that it is something which is implied in all existence. Nothing can exist without Matter, which is one of the four causes of the existence of everything ; but, on the other hand, it may be said that Matter itself has no existence. Things can only be realised by the mind, and so come into actual existence, if they be endowed with Form ; pure Matter denuded of form cannot be perceived or known, and therefore cannot be actual. Suppose we take marble as the matter or material of which a statue is composed,—if we think of the marble we attribute to it qualities—colour, brilliancy, hardness, and so on, and these qualities constitute Form, and the marble is no longer pure Matter. We have to ask, then, what is the matter "underlying" the marble ? and again, if we figure to ourselves anything possessing definite qualities—as, for instance, any of the simple substances of chemistry—we at once have not only matter, but form. Matter, thus, in the theory of Aristotle, is something which must always be presupposed, and which yet always eludes us, and flies back from the region of the actual into that of the possible. Ultimate matter, or "first timber," necessarily exists as the condition of all things, but it remains as one of those possibilities which can never be realised (see above, p. 56), and thus forms the antithesis to God, the ever-actual. From all this it may be inferred that Aristotle would have considered it very unphilosophical to represent Matter, as some philosophers of the present day appear to do, as having had an in-

dependent existence, and as having contained the germs, not only of all other things, but even of Reason itself, so that out of Matter Reason was developed. According to Aristotle, it is impossible to conceive Matter at all as actually existing, far less as the one independent antecedent cause of all things; and it is equally impossible to think of Reason as non-existent, or as having had a late and derivative origin.

Subsidiary to his theory of knowledge, Aristotle discourses at some length, both in his treatise 'On the Soul' and in his 'Physiological Tracts,' on the Five Senses. He affirms that the sentient soul of man is able to discriminate between the properties of things, "because it is itself a mean or middle term between the two sensible extremes of which it takes cognisance,—hot and cold, hard and soft, wet and dry, white and black, acute and grave, bitter and sweet, light and darkness, &c. We feel no sensation at all when the object touched is exactly of the same temperature with ourselves, neither hotter nor colder." * This doctrine, which is obviously true, points to the relativity of the qualities of things; it shows that all qualities—*e.g.*, "great" and "small," and all the rest—are named from the human stand point, and that, in short, "Man is the measure of all things." Protagoras, indeed, had used this *dictum* in order to throw doubt on all knowledge and truth, for he said that everything was relative to the individual percipient, and that what ap-

* Grote's 'Aristotle,' vol. ii. p. 197. See 'On the Soul,' II. x.

peared sweet to one man might seem bitter to another man; thus, that there could be no truth beyond "what any one troweth;" any assertion might be true for the individual who made it, and not for any one besides. Aristotle argues against this sceptical theory, ('Metaphys.' III. iv.); in spite of minor fluctuations in the subjective perceptions of individuals he finds ground for truth and certainty in the *consensus* of the human race, and in science which deals with universal propositions obtained by reason out of particular perceptions.

As usual, there is a great contrast between the correctness of his general philosophy of the senses and that of his particular scientific theory of the operation of each sense. While the world has made no advance upon the one—which was arrived at by mere force of thought—the other, lacking the aid of instruments and accumulated experience, has been wholly left behind, and appears infantile when compared with the discoveries of a Helmholtz. The following is a specimen of Aristotle's physiology of the senses: "Do sensations travel to us?" he asks. "Certainly," is the reply; "the nearest person will catch an odour first. Sound is perceived *after* the blow which caused it. The letters of which words are composed get disarranged by being carried in the air (!), and hence people fail to hear what has been said at a distance. Each sense has its own proper vehicle. Water is the vehicle of sight, air of sound, fire of smell, earth of touch and taste. Sensations are not bodies, but motions or affections of the vehicle or medium along

which they travel to us. Light,* however, is an exception to this rule; it is an existence, not a motion; it produces alteration, and alteration of a whole mass may be instantaneous and simultaneous, as in a mass of water freezing. Thus Empedocles was mistaken (C) when he said that light travels from the sun to the earth, and that there is a moment when each ray is not yet seen, but is being borne midway."—('Phys. Tracts.' 'On Sensation.' vi.)

Among the prominent contributions to mental science which were made by Aristotle, none is more famous than his doctrine of the "Law of Association," which he throws out while discussing Memory and Recollection in his 'Physiological Tracts.' He says, "Recollection is the recalling of knowledge. It implies the existence in the mind of certain starting-points, or clues, so that when you get hold of one you will be led to the rest. It depends on the law of association: we recollect when such and such a motion naturally follows such and such; we feel the latter motion, and that produces the former. In trying to recollect, we search after something that is in *sequence*, or *similarity*, or *contrast*, or *proximity*, to the thing which we want to recollect. Milk will suggest whiteness, whiteness the air, the air moisture, and thus the rainy season, which was what we were trying to think of. No animal but man has the power of recollection, though many animals have memory. Re-

* The theory of light here given seems to be not only erroneous in itself, but also inconsistent with Aristotle's explanation of the twinkling of the stars.—(See above, p. 136.)

collection implies consideration and a train of reasoning, and yet it is a bodily affection—a physical movement and presentation.” Aristotle adds that “persons with large heads are bad at recollecting, on account of the weight upon their perceptive organ (!), and that the very young and very old are so, on account of the state of movement they are in—the one in the movement of growth, the other in that of decay.”

These considerations, however, whether correct or erroneous, all belong rather to psychology than to metaphysics. Let us conclude by endeavouring to gather Aristotle’s opinions on three great metaphysical problems: The destiny of the human soul, free will, and the nature of God. His opinions on these subjects have to be “gathered,” because, as said above (p. 6), he had no great taste for such speculations, and was in this respect very unlike Plato. Over the mind of Plato the idea of a future life had exercised an absorbing influence. Rising to an almost Christian hope and faith, he had held out, as a consolation in the hour of death, the promise of an immortality to be spent in the fruition of truth; and, as a motive for human actions and a basis for morals, he had enunciated a system of future rewards and punishments, closely corresponding with Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. What had been so prominent with Plato was by Aristotle put away into the extreme background. In early life, indeed, he had written a dialogue, called ‘*Eudemus*,’ which turned on the story that an exile had been told by the oracle that within a certain time he should be “restored to his home,” and that within

that time he had died, and thus in another sense had "gone home." It is conjectured that this youthful production may have treated of the survival of the individual Reason into another state of existence. But in Aristotle's maturer works, so far from such a doctrine being laid down, and deductions made from it, passages occur which would seem to render it untenable. "The Soul," says Aristotle, "is the function of the body, as sight is of the eye. Some of its parts, however, may be separable from the body, as not arising out of the material organisation. This is the case with the Reason, which cannot be regarded as the result of bodily conditions, but which is divine, and enters into each of us from without. Reason, as manifested in the individual mind, is twofold, constructive and passive (see above, p. 166). The passive Reason, which receives the impressions of external things, is the seat of memory, but it perishes with the body; while the constructive Reason transcends the body, being capable of separation from it and from all things. It is an everlasting existence, incapable of being mingled with matter, or affected by it; it is prior and subsequent to the individual mind; but though immortal, it carries no memory with it."*

This last sentence would seem logically to exclude the possibility of a future life for the individual, for memory is requisite to individuality; and if all that is immortal in us is incapable of memory, it would seem that the only immortality possible would be that,

* Collected from 'Soul,' II. i. 7-12; III. v. 2. 'Generation,' II. iii. 10.

of a Buddhist *nirvāna*, all the actions of this life and all individual distinctions having been erased. Thus, it would appear that the same *dictum* might be applied to the human race that is applied ('Soul,' II. iv. 4) to the works of Nature: "Perpetuity, for which all things long, is attained not by the individual, for that is impossible, but by the species." These logical deductions are, however, never drawn by Aristotle himself, who in his 'Ethics' (I. xi. 1) protests against any rude contradiction of the popular opinion that the dead retain their consciousness, and even their interest in what passes in this world. Thus, whether he did or did not believe in a future life has been a matter for controversy in modern times. On the whole, while we have hardly sufficient data for pronouncing one way or the other, it seems certain that no part of his philosophy, so far as we possess it, shows any trace of the influence of this doctrine.

As to Free Will: That is a question which has arisen out of theology, out of the ideas of the infinite power and knowledge of a personal God, which caused the question to be asked, Can man do anything except what he has been predestined to do? But such a difficulty implies two conditions, both of which were absent from the mind of Aristotle—namely, a strong apprehension of the personality and will of God, and a strong apprehension of the importance of human acts and of the eternal consequences attached to them. Aristotle, as we shall see, can hardly be said to have attributed personality to the Deity; he thought human actions to be of comparatively small importance; and

he thought freedom to be, in a certain sense, valueless. Hence, we only mention the problem of Free Will in connection with him in order to show how his ideas contrast with those of the modern world. By a curious metaphor ('*Metaphys.*' XI. x.) he figured the universe as a household, in which the sun and stars and all the heavens are the masters, whose highranks and important positions prevent any of them time being left to a merely arbitrary disposal, for all is taken up with a round of the noblest duties and occupations. Other parts of the universe are like the inferior members of the family—the slaves and domestic animals—who even to a great extent pursue their own devices. Under the last category man would be ranked. Aristotle does not regard the unchanging and perpetual motion of the heavenly bodies as a *boon*, but what is *arbitrary* in the human will as a *privilege*. His cosmical views tended to disparage the dignity of man. He would say with the Psalmist, "What is man in comparison with the heavens?" But he failed to reach the counterbalancing thought of Kant, that "There are two things which strike the mind with awe—the starry heavens and the moral nature of man."

Within an eternal and immutable circumference of the heaven, Aristotle placed a comparatively narrow sphere of the changeable, and in this, Nature, Chance, and Human Will were the causes at work. He admitted a certain amount of determinism as controlling the human will, but he did not care to trace out the exact proportions of this; he merely maintained that the

individual was a "joint cause," if not the sole cause, of his own character and actions ('Eth.' III. vii. 20). He thought that mankind had existed from all eternity, and that there had been over and over again a constant process of development going on, till the sciences, and arts, and society had been brought to perfection; and then that by some great deluge, or other natural convulsion, the race had invariably been destroyed—all but a few individuals who had escaped, and who had had to commence anew the first steps towards civilisation!

To us, in the present day, it seems absolutely clear that when we speak of a person we do not mean a thing, and that when we speak of a thing we do not mean a person. In Grecian philosophy, however, this was not the case, for by both Plato* and Aristotle, God was spoken of both as personal and as impersonal, without any reconciliation between the two points of view, or any remark on the subject. In the same way they both pass from the plural to the singular, and speak of "the gods" or "God" as if it hardly mattered which term was used. This seems at first surprising, but when we look into the matter (confining our inquiry to the views of Aristotle), certain explanations offer themselves. When he speaks of "the gods," he is partly accommodating himself to the ordinary language of Greece, and partly he is indicating the heavenly bodies, as conscious, happy

* See Professor Jowett's 'Dialogues of Plato Translated,' vol. iv. p. 11.

existences, worthy to be reckoned with that Supreme God, Who inhabits the outside of the universe, and imparts their everlasting motion to the heavens. When he speaks of "God," he has in his mind that Supreme Being, Who, unmoved Himself, is the cause of motion to all things, being the object of reason and of desire—being, in short, the Good. Here the transition from a person to an abstract idea is obvious; but if God is the object of desire to the universe and to Nature, who or what is it that desires Him? Clearly, reason or divine instinct is placed by this theory within Nature itself. In other words, this is Pantheism; it represents Nature as instinct with God, and God in Nature desiring God as the Idea of Good. But Aristotle passes on from this view to describe God as "Thought"—that is, as rather more personal than impersonal—and he asks, on what does that thought think? Thought must have an object, and it will be determined in its character by that object; it will be elevated or deteriorated according as the object on which it thinks is high or low. But this cannot be the case with God, who cannot be subject to these alterations. "God, therefore, must think upon Himself; the thought of God is the thinking upon thought." Only for a moment (*Metaphys.* XI. x. 1) does Aristotle seem to take up something like our point of view, when he says that God may be to the world as the general is to an army. This seems like the modern view, because it would imply something like will in the nature of God. But it is a mere passing metaphor,

and none of the other utterances of the Stagirite would attribute anything like will, providence, or ordering of affairs to the Deity. We are told ('Eth.' X. viii. 7) that it would be absurd to attribute to Him moral qualities or virtues, or any human function except philosophic thought. He enjoys, however, happiness of the most exalted kind, such as we can frame but an indistinct notion of by the analogy of our own highest and most blessed moods. This happiness is everlasting, and God "has, or rather is," continuous and eternal life and duration.*

We have been unavoidably launched upon a solemn subject, because any account of Aristotle which did not sketch his theories of the Deity would have been incomplete. It will be seen that, on the whole, his tendency is to what we should call Pantheism. "Reason is divine, and Reason is everywhere, desiring the Good and moving the world:" that is a summary of Aristotle's philosophy. Of all modern speculators, the one who most nearly approaches him is John Stuart Mill, who represents God as benevolent, but not omnipotent. Aristotle also would say that the desire for the Good which runs through Nature is baffled by the imperfections of matter and the irregularities of chance. The great defect in Aristotle's conception of God is, that he denies that God can be a moral Being. This, in fact, entirely separates God from man; it leaves only Theology possible, but not

* The above statement of Aristotle's views of the Deity is collected from 'Metaphysics,' XI. vi.-x.

Religion ; it takes away from morality all divine sanctions. Plato's view was different ; but even he fell short of that deep idea of God, as the Righteous One, which was revealed to the Hebrew nation through their lawgivers and prophets, and afterwards through our Saviour.

CHAPTER X.

ARISTOTLE SINCE THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

WE have seen above (p. 38) that in the time of Cicero—that is to say, shortly before the Christian era—the works of Aristotle were very little known even to philosophers. The edition of those works by Andronicus was made and published in the last half-century before the birth of Christ. And then—three hundred years after the death of Aristotle—there began silently and imperceptibly the first dawn of that wider reputation of him, which was destined to shine through the whole of Europe for a thousand years with ever-growing and increasing splendour.

During the period of the Roman Empire, the day for original philosophies was gone by. The works of Aristotle, in the form in which they were now presented to the world—being a culmination of ancient thought, and containing a dogmatic exposition of the outlines of every science; being rich in ideas and facts, precise in terms, and yet condensed, and often obscure—offered to the minds of intellectual men, and especially the subtle Greeks of those times, exactly the kind of food and employment which suited them. To study one of these treatises, and comment upon it,

became now regarded as sufficient achievement for the life of one man. Aristotle thus shared the honours awarded to the sacred books of different nations; he became placed so high as an authority, that merely to expound or explain his meaning was a path to fame. The race of Greek commentators, or "*Scholiasts*," was spread over three or four centuries, the most distinguished names among them being those of Boethius, Nicolas of Damascus, Alexander of Aegre, Aspasius, Adrastus, Galenus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Dexippus, Themistius, Proclus, Ammonius, David the Armenian, Asclepius, Olympiodorus, Simplicius, and Johannes Philoponus. The writings of many of these worthies have been lost, and their memory only survives through their having been quoted in the more enduring commentaries of others. What remains of the whole body of these *Scholia* is various in worth, ranging from emptiest platitudes up to remarks of subtlety and ability. Occasionally, but too rarely, the Greek scholiasts preserve for us some precious sentence or tradition of antiquity. The late Professor Brandis has condensed into one closely-printed quarto volume all that he considered worth notice of the "*Scholia* upon Aristotle," and even with some of these we might have dispensed.

Gradually Christianity took possession of the Roman Empire, and then came the inundation of barbarians, whose uncultivated natures had no sympathy with literature, science, or philosophy. Libraries were destroyed, or, unused, underwent the course of natural decay. The arts fell into abeyance, and Western Europe, as if in order to be born again, seemed to pass

through the waters of Lethe. From the sixth to the thirteenth century all knowledge of the Greek writers was lost. But long before the close of this period intellectual life had begun to stir again among the friars and ecclesiastics of the Continent; and the chief nourishment for that life consisted of a fragment from antiquity, being none other than Latin translations* of the so-called 'Categories' and 'Interpretation' of Aristotle (see above, pp. 50-57), and of the 'Introduction' of Porphyry to the first-named of the two treatises. In earlier and better-informed ages Aristotle had been repudiated by some of the Fathers of the Church as being, at all events in comparison with Plato, "atheistical." But no harm to theology could arise from a study of the dry formulæ of logic and metaphysics. Nay, these formulæ, while totally devoid of all dangerous colouring or character—being merely some of the fundamental and ordinary principles of reasoning—were likely to do good service to the Church, by training her adherents to argue skilfully in her behalf. Thus, the 'Categories' and 'Interpretation' won their place as text books for youth; and thus the "Scholastic Philosophy," which consisted in lectures and disputations chiefly on matters mooted by Aristotle, took its rise out of the Latin translations of these Peripatetic treatises.

Afterwards a richer knowledge of Aristotle came to the schools of the West from what might have been considered an unlikely source—namely, the Arabs in

* These translations were attributed to Boethius, the "last of the philosophers," at the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century.

Spain. Departing from the example of him who burned the Alexandrian library, and from the traditional tendencies of Mahometans in all ages, the Arabs of Bagdad, Cairo, and Cordova indulged in a period of enlightenment and of intellectual activity. This period was chiefly inaugurated by Almamun, the son of Harun-al Rashid, and seventh of the Abbasside Caliphs at Bagdad (A.D. 810), who "invited the Muses from their ancient seats. His ambassadors at Constantinople, his agents in Armenia, Syria, and Egypt, collected the volumes of Grecian science; at his command they were translated by the most skilful interpreters into the Arabic language; his subjects were exhorted assiduously to peruse these instructive writings; and the successor of Mahomet assisted with pleasure and modesty at the assemblies and disputations of the learned." "The age of Arabian learning continued about five hundred years till the great irruption of the Moguls, and was coeval with the darkest and most deplorable period of European annals."* It was during the twelfth century that the Arabs of Cordova became the schoolmasters of the "schoolmen," and poured a flood of learning into Europe. The chief of them was the great Ibn Rischid (A.D. 1120-1198), whose name was Latinised into Averroes. Besides other philosophical works, he wrote 'Commentaries' on all the principal works of Aristotle, and these were translated into Latin and published abroad. Averroes knew no Greek, and his commentaries were made upon the existing Arabic versions of Aristotle; but he

* Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' chap. lii.

quoted the translation of the text of each passage entire before elucidating the meaning, and thus he brought a great deal of the thought of Aristotle, though passed through a double translation, to the notice of Europe. In commenting upon Aristotle, his attention seems to have been drawn to that passage, above referred to (p. 172), on the difference between the Constructive and the Passive Reason. Following out this idea, he made it the basis of a doctrine of "Monopsychism," to the effect that the Constructive Reason is one individual substance, being one and the same in Socrates and Plato, and all other individuals; whence it follows that individuality consists only in bodily sensations, which are perishable, so that nothing which is individual can be immortal, and nothing which is immortal can be individual. These doctrines spread from the Arabs to the Jews of Spain, and from them to the Christian schools, and Averroism became a leaven in the scholastic philosophies, causing, as might be expected, the most virulent strife between the opponents and supporters of the theory of "Monopsychism."

In the latter part of the thirteenth century Aristotle reached the height of his glory. At this time, partly from Arabian copies in Spain and partly from Greek MSS which the Crusaders brought with them from Constantinople, Western Christendom had obtained the whole of his works. He was now commented on by eminent ecclesiastics; indeed he occupied and almost monopolised the most powerful minds of Europe. Chief among these may be mentioned Albert "the Great," the most fertile and learned of the schoolmen,

who has left commentaries on Aristotle which fill six folio volumes, and his pupil, St Thomas Aquinas, who prepared (1269-70), through the instrumentality of the monk Wilhelm of Moerbeke, a new translation of the entire works after Greek originals; and who himself wrote laborious commentaries on the 'Metaphysics,' the 'Ethics,' and other books. It may be observed that by these great churchmen Aristotle is treated with the most implicit confidence; they seem blind to all that is Greek and pagan in his point of view; they defend him from charges of Averroism; and treat him, in short, as one of themselves. All this, of course, argues a great want of the critical and historical faculty, and much mixing up of things — "syncretism," as it is called by the learned; but historical criticism was hardly to be looked for in the Middle Ages.

The *Stagirite* was now almost incorporated with Christianity. The *Summa Theologiae* of St Thomas Aquinas was a compound of the logic, physics, and ethics of Aristotle with Christian divinity. But the highest honour of all came to him in the year 1300 A.D., when he was hailed in the 'Divina Commedia' of Dante as "the master of those that know," sitting as head of "the philosophic family," to whom Socrates and Plato and all the rest must look up.* Him Dante

* Dante, 'Inferno,' canto iv. 131—

"Vidi il Maestro di color che sanno
Seder tra filosofica famiglia;
Tutti lo miran, tutti onor fanno.
Quivi vid' io Socrate e Platone,
Che innanzi agli altri più presso gli stanno."

figured thus sitting in the "limbo," or fringe, of hell, with all the great spirits of antiquity, who had lived before Christianity and without baptism; they were free from torment, but were sad, because they felt the desire, but had no hope, of seeing God.

Dante had been a diligent and reverential student of Aristotle, especially in the commentaries of St Thomas Aquinas. In his 'Convito,' he says that "Aristotle is most worthy of trust and obedience, as being the master-artist who considers of and teaches us the end * of human life, to which, as men, we are ordained." In the 11th canto of the 'Inferno,' he follows up Aristotle's views of the "unnatural" character of usury (see above, p. 122), and places usurers in hell among those who do violence to God and Nature, the reasons for which he sets forth in a learned discourse. But the most striking thing of all is to find that Dante, in the 24th canto of the 'Paradiso,' commences the statement of his own theological creed in words taken directly from Aristotle's definition of the Deity—

"I in one God believe;
One sole eternal Godhead, *of whose love*
All heaven is moved, himself unmoved the while."†

And in the 27th canto, Beatrice, standing on the ninth heaven, points to the circumference, or *primum mobile*, of Aristotle (see above, p. 136), and discourses to Dante in the following thoroughly Aristotelian terms:—

* This, of course, refers to the 'Ethics.'—See above, p. 101.

† Cary's Translation.—See above, p. 176.

"Here is the god, whence motion on his race
 Starts: motionless the centre, and the rest
 All moved around. Except the soul divine,
 Place in this heaven is none; the soul divine,
 Wherein the love, which ruleth o'er its orb,
 Is kindled, and the virtue, that it sheds:
 One circle, light and love, enclaspng it,
 As this doth clasp the others; and to Him,
 Who draws the bound, its limit only known.
 Measured itself by none, it doth divide
 Motion to all, counted unto them, forth,
 As by the fifth or half ye count forth ten.
 The vase, wherein time's roots are plunged, thou seest:
 Look elsewhere for the leaves."

It was not till 240 years after these verses had been written that Copernicus propounded his system of the motion of the earth and the other planets round the sun; and that system only gradually won its way to acceptance, even in scientific minds, and with the aid of the demonstrations of Galileo. Till the end of the seventeenth century the Aristotelian system—further elaborated by the Alexandrian Ptolemy and by King Alphonso X. of Castile (1252-1284 A.D.)—maintained its influence, and filled the literature of all Europe with a particular train of associations.* Shakespeare lived and died in the faith of the older system. Milton had been bred in it as a boy, and the plan of his universe in the *'Paradise Lost'* was drawn accord-

* When Shakespeare wrote—

"And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,"

he was referring to the Ptolemaic or Alphonsine spheres. The common metaphor of a person's 'sphere' is a survival of the same notion.

ing to it. Yet still, as a learned man, he was well acquainted with all that could be said in favour of the Copernican system. And he puts these arguments into the mouth of Adam in the 8th book of *'Paradise Lost.'* An angel, in reply, reminds Adam—what is, in fact, the case—that neither the motion of the sun nor of the earth can be absolutely proved; and adds that these are matters too high and abstruse for human inquiry. Milton's mind was "apparently uncertain to the last which of the two systems, the Ptolemaic or the Copernican, was the true one." * Surely, however, if but slowly, the Copernican theory established itself in the mind of Europe; and when once it had been established, then a great gulf was set between Aristotle and the modern world.

We have seen Aristotle an object of reverence to the great scholastic philosophers and the great poet of the Middle Ages. But we must not forget that the universities were, so to speak, founded in Aristotle—that for a long time the chief end of their being was to teach Aristotle. Chaucer describes the zeal of the poor Oxford student for this kind of learning in the following terms:—

"A clerk there was of Oxenford also
That unto logik hadde long y go:
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fast, I undertake;
But looked holwe and thereto soberlye.
Ful threadbare was his overest courtepye.

* See Professor Masson's edition of *'Milton's Poetical Works'* (Macmillan, 1874), vol. i. p. 92.

For he had gotten him no benefice,
 He was not worldly to have an office.
 For, him was lever have at his beddes hed
 Twenty bookes clothed in blake or red
 Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
 Than robes rich or fidel or sautrie."

This almost living picture from the fourteenth century doubtless represented correctly the loyal and unshaking faith in the Scriptures, to be found among many generations of students, not only at Oxford, but at Paris and Padua, and the other seats of universities.

But a spirit of revolt against authority in general, and especially against the authority of Aristotle, was destined to show itself, being fostered by the progress of time, the revival of learning, and the Reformation. In the year 1536 we find Peter Ramus, then a youth of twenty years of age, choosing as the subject of his thesis for the M.A. degree, in the University of Paris, the proposition, that "Whatever has been said by Aristotle is false!" It may be imagined with what consternation the announcement of this thesis, which seemed scarcely less than blasphemous, was received by the academical authorities. However, the young Ramus acquitted himself with such ability, as well as boldness, that he obtained his degree and the licence to teach. This licence he employed in lecturing and writing against the Peripatetic logic. He propounded a method of his own in which more attention was to be paid to the *clearness* of truth. He formed a sect of Ramists, and rallied round himself the malcontent spirits of France, Germany, and Switzerland. In some of the universities Ramism obtained a firm hold. But

he had to fight a hard battle with the Aristotelians, who were armed with official power, and not slow to use it in the way of persecution; his books were often condemned to be suppressed, and finally he was a martyr to the cause which he had chosen. Being a Huguenot, he was assassinated by his Aristotelian enemies during the massacre of St Bartholomew (1572 A.D.) The arguments of Ramus seem nowadays to have no weight against the 'Organon' of Aristotle, but they are valid against that perverted use of the 'Organon' which constituted the Scholastic method. It was quite necessary that the spell which Aristotle had so long exercised over the world should be broken and Ramus did good service in somewhat rudely assailing it.

If the first great attack upon Aristotle proceeded from a spirit of revolt within the logic-schools, the second was a direct manifestation of the results of the Renaissance, and consisted in bringing learning and criticism to bear upon the works of Aristotle. This was done by Patrizzi, or Patricius, who brought out his '*Discussiones Peripateticæ*' at Bâle in 1571. Patricius possessed a combination of character which is fortunately not often seen, —being extremely learned and very able, but, at the same time, ill-conditioned, egotistical, and wrong headed. Preferring in his own mind a sort of Neo-Platonic philosophy to the Peripatetic system, he set himself to work in the book just mentioned to pull Aristotle to pieces. The first section of the '*Discussiones*' treated of the life and morals of the Stagirite, and raked together against him all the per-

sonal charges to be found scattered through the remains of antiquity (see above, p. 28) ; the second section critically assailed with great learning the genuineness of the works of Aristotle, and proved them all to be spurious (!) The remaining sections undertook to refute the system of philosophy which they contained. The attack of Patricius was overborne in malignity, yet still it had a powerful effect in inducing men to think for themselves when they saw the claims of their oracle thus stringently called in question.

Another impulse to reaction against authority was given by science itself, in the shape of discoveries which were irreconcilable with the *dicta* of authority. In the year 1592, Galileo, wishing to test the truth of Aristotle's principle that "the velocity of falling bodies is proportionate to their weight," ascended the leaning tower of Pisa, and launching bodies of different weight, demonstrated that they reached the ground simultaneously, and thus that the principle which had been so long held with undoubting faith was erroneous. The Aristotelians of Pisa, however, were so much annoyed by this demonstration, that they compelled Galileo to leave the city.

Aristotle's philosophy had, since the days of St Thomas Aquinas, been bound up with the Catholic Church. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that Luther, in the commencement of the Reformation, should have "invighed against the Aristotelian logic and metaphysics, or rather against the sciences themselves ; nor was Melancthon at that time much behind him. But time ripened in this, as it did in theology,

the disciple's excellent understanding; and he even obtained influence enough over the master to make him retract some of that invective against philosophy which at first threatened to bear down all human reason. Melanchthon became a strenuous advocate of Aristotle, in opposition to all other ancient philosophy. He introduced into the University of Wittenberg, to which all Protestant Germany looked up, a scheme of dialectics and physics, founded upon the Peripatetic school, but improved by his own acuteness and knowledge. Thus in his books the physical science of antiquity is enlarged by all that had been added in astronomy and physiology. It need hardly be said that the authority of Scripture was always resorted to as controlling a philosophy which had been considered unfavourable to natural religion.* This system of Melanchthon's got the nickname of the "Philippic Method," and it was received with so much favour in the Protestant Universities of Germany as to cause these Universities to oppose the spread of Ramism.

Scholasticism and the love of authority died hard, and not without many a struggle. It is recorded that so late as the year 1629 an Act of the French Parliament was passed forbidding attacks upon Aristotle! The Jesuits employed the Peripatetic tenets in arguing against free-thinkers like Descartes. Even to the present day the manuals of philosophy in Roman Catholic ecclesiastical establishments are a *résumé* of Aristotle.

* Hallam's 'Introduction to the Literature of Europe.' Part I., chap. iii.

Until the seventeenth century, when the authority of Aristotle was questioned, "his disciples could always point with scorn at the endeavours which had as yet been made to supplant it, they could ask whether the wisdom so long revered was to be set aside for the fanatical reveries of Paracelsus, the unintelligible ideas of Bruno, or the arbitrary hypotheses of Telesio."* But in the seventeenth century modern philosophy took a new and splendid start in Bacon and Descartes, while modern science commenced its glorious career with Galileo, Kepler, and Newton. Bacon, with his rich scientific imagination and his stately language, was a fitting herald of the new era. He sometimes reflects the spirit of Ramus or Patricius, and applies to Aristotle harsh terms which were rather merited by the scholastic pedants who had been Aristotelians only in the letter. Could the Stagiraite himself have returned to the earth at this moment, he would doubtless have declared for Galileo and Bacon against the Peripatetics. Aristotelianism was not refuted in Europe, but its long day was now past; it was superseded and quietly put aside when other and fresher subjects of interest came to fill men's minds. Bacon contributed to this result, not by railing at the "categories" and the "syllogism," but by exciting people's fancy with suggestions of the extension of human power to be gained by researches into nature—suggestions which subsequent results have verified a hundred-fold.

From henceforth it became impossible for an educated man to be an Aristotelian, because however much he

* Hallam's Introduction. Part III., chap. iii.

might in his youth have learned from Aristotle, there was so much more to be learned which was not to be found in Aristotle, that Aristotelianism could only constitute a portion of his culture. In the Middle Ages it had constituted the whole of culture ; but that time had gone by, and in the modern world it became possible to gain elsewhere even most of that which the study of Aristotle had to offer. The best of Aristotle's thought had now come to be the common property of the world, and men could become good logicians without reading the 'Organon,' and without being conscious of the obligations which, after all, they owed to its author.

Perhaps the period of the greatest neglect which the memory of Aristotle underwent since the Christian era was the eighteenth century. This was a period of antithesis to mediævalism, and, at the same time, a period of mechanical philosophy and shallow learning. At the English universities all studies, except perhaps mathematics and verbal scholarship, were at a low ebb. Only small portions of Aristotle were taught, and these were ill taught without reference to their context and real significance. But with the nineteenth century there came a restitution of the honours of the Stagirite, who was now regarded in his proper light — that is to say, historically, and not as if he were an authority for modern times. This came about with the rise of the great German philosophies. There have been two great periods of philosophy in the world: the period of Greek philosophy in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C., and that of German philosophy during

the first part of the present century. And there is a certain affinity between the two. Kant and Hegel have more in common with Plato and Aristotle than they have either with the old Greek philosophy or with the psychological systems of the last century. An age which produced Kant and Hegel was likely to appreciate their ancient forefathers; and Hegel advanced the study of the works of Aristotle as "the noblest problem of classical philology." The Germans have applied themselves to this question with peculiar success, especially Hermann Heidegger, Heidegger, Zeller, Bonitz, Spengel, Spahn, Porro, Ross, and many others who might be mentioned. The great Berlin edition of the works of Aristotle, begun and under the direction of the Prussian Royal Academy, is a monument of their labours. We have seen the vicissitudes of a countryman of Aristotle; how at different times he was partially known, misconceived, over-rated, under-rated, and both praised and blamed by various nations. It happened no previous time he has been more correctly known and estimated than he is at present.

The various opinions of Aristotle to mankind have been to some extent indicated in the foregoing pages. To attempt to summarise them all would be vain; but perhaps it may be said, in a word, that Aristotle has contributed more than any one man to the scientific education of the world. The amount of the influence which he has exercised may partly be inferred from the traces which he has left in all the languages of modern Europe. Our everyday conversation is

full of Aristotelian "fossils," that is, remnants of his peculiar phraseology. These mostly come through Latin renderings of his terms, though sometimes the original Greek form is preserved. The following are a few specimens of these fossils: "Maxim" is the major premiss of the Aristotelian syllogism. "Principle" has the same meaning—it comes from *principium*, the Latin for "beginning" or "starting point," which was one of Aristotle's terms for a major premiss. "Matter" comes from *materies*, the Latin for "timber" (see above, p. 167); when we say "it does not matter," or it makes a "material" difference, we are indebted to Aristotle for our words. "Form," "end," "final cause," "motive," "energy," "actually," "category," "predicament" (the latter of these two bears Latin for the former), the "mean" and the "extremes," "habit" (both in the sense of "moral habit" and of "dress"), "faculty," and "quintessence," are all purely Peripatetic; while the terms "Metaphysics" and "Natural History," are derived from two of the titles of Aristotle's works.

Aristotle, the strongest of the ancients and the oracle of the Middle Ages, must always hold a place of honour in the history of European thought. Writings which have interested and influenced mankind so deeply and through so many centuries can never fall into contempt, even though they may be devoid of the graces of style and though the matter in them may be either superseded or else absorbed into the treatises of other authors. Nor is it from mere curiosity—from a merely antiquarian or

historical point of view—that the works of the Stagiraite continue to be studied. As long as the process of higher education in modern Europe consists so largely in inculcating the mind with the literature of classical antiquity, so long will a study of certain works of Aristotle remain as one of the last stages of that process. These works—especially the ‘*Rhetoric*,’ ‘*Art of Poetry*,’ ‘*Politics*,’ and ‘*Politics*’—have a remarkable educational value. They form an introduction to philosophy; they invite comparison of ancient and modern ways of thinking; they offer rich stores of information as to human nature—so much the same in all ages; and they train the mind to follow the Aristotelian method of analytic insight. This method consists in concentration of the mind upon the subject in hand, recalling together all the facts and opinions attainable upon it, and dwelling on these and scrutinizing and comparing them till a light flashes on the whole subject. Such is the procedure to be learnt, by imitation, from Aristotle.

THUCYDIDES

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N O T E

THE chapter on the Plague at Athens has had the advantage of revision by the writer's friend, Dr W. A. Greenhill.

The translations are all original; but a word or phrase has sometimes been gladly adopted from Mr Dale's version, and from Mr Wilkins's paraphrase of the speeches.

W. L. C.

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THUCYDIDES.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

It has been remarked already, in one of the earlier volumes of this series, that when we use the word "ancient" of the Greek and Roman writers, we are employing a term which, from one point of view, has a very unequal application. It is not altogether a question of date which makes a writer ancient or modern. It is the position which he occupies in the cycle of the national literature, if his country has ever reached a high pitch of civilisation, which marks his thoughts and diction as recent or archaic. Our Anglo-Saxon historians and the Arthurian romances are in this sense far more ancient than Horace or Cicero. "There is, in fact," says Dr Arnold, "an ancient and a modern period in the history of every people: the ancient differing, and the modern in many essential points agreeing with, that in which we now live. Thus the largest portion of that history which we commonly call ancient is

practically modern, as it describes society in a stage analogous to that in which it now is : while on the other hand, much of what is called modern history is practically ancient, as it relates to a state of things which has passed away. Thucydides and Xenophon, the orators of Athens, and the philosophers, speak a wisdom more applicable to us politically than the wisdom of even our own countrymen who lived in the middle ages ; and their position, both intellectual and political, more nearly resembles our own." More than this, there are cases in the literature of the same people, in which a single generation marks the step from the old to the new. Herodotus and Thucydides were almost contemporaries : between the probable dates of their birth there was an interval of scarcely thirteen years. But the distance between them, as writers of history, is not to be measured by a chronological table. In Herodotus we have the ancient chronicler, with all his charms and with all his defects. He is at once story teller, geographer, antiquarian, and traveller ; at times he seems to assume the licence allowed to story tellers, and attributed somewhat unfairly to travellers, of preferring the picturesque and the marvellous to the baldness of fact. But we have to remember that the readers (or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, the hearers) of his day looked for this kind of intellectual entertainment, and had a far more ready appreciation of the legend which magnified the national heroes, and the tale which described the wonders of strange lands and peoples, than of the painful accuracy of impartial history.

When we turn from the pages of Herodotus to those of Thucydides, the change is wonderful. The latter writer is fully conscious of it himself; he feels that he is the teacher of a new school. The progress of thought in Greece during a single generation had been greater perhaps than ever before or since. Philosophy, rhetoric, and the drama, had all made vast and rapid strides. And with Thucydides, history, properly so called, began. He treats his predecessors in this line with even scantier courtesy than is usual in such cases. He classes the "story-writer"—there was no word as yet for "historian"—with the poet, as both equally mythical and untrustworthy. He speaks of the "wonderfully small amount of pains with which the investigation of the truth is pursued by most men, who commonly avail themselves of what they find ready to their hand." "Men accept from one another the current report of past events, without putting them to the test of examination, even when they have taken place in their own country."* His own method, he assures his readers, shall be something very different indeed. We might well be inclined to smile at the confident self-assertion of the following language, if we did not know that the promise was largely justified by the performance:—

"If, from the evidence here advanced, the reader should conclude that the course of events was on the whole as I have traced it, he would not be far wrong; instead of trusting rather to what poets have sung about

* L. 20.

them, dressing them out to make them grander than they were, or to what the chroniclers have put together, rather with a view to make their tale pleasant to the ear than accurate in its facts; bearing in mind that such matters cannot be subjected to strict examination, inasmuch as most of them through lapse of time have won their way into the region of fable so as to lose all credit; but holding that they have been traced with sufficient accuracy, allowing for their antiquity, from the best data at our command. And though men always think the war of their own times the most important, so long as they are engaged in it, but when it is over bestow their admiration rather on the wars of the past; still, the war of which I write, if we contemplate its operations and results, will appear the most important of any.

“Now, as to the language used by the several speakers, either when they were preparing for the war or were actually engaged in it, it would have been difficult for me, as to what I heard in person, or for other parties who reported to me from various quarters, to record exactly what was said. But I have set down what each seemed likely to have said as most to the purpose under the circumstances, while adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of the words used. But as to the actions of the war, I have not been content to report them on the authority of any chance informant, or from my own conception of them; but either from personal knowledge where I was present, or after the most careful investigation possible in every case where I gained my information from others. Very

laborious were these inquiries; since those who were present in the several actions did not all give the same account of the same affair, but as they were swayed by favour to one side or the other, or as their memory served them. Possibly this avoidance of any fabulous embellishment may make my work less entertaining; but I shall be well content if those shall pronounce my history useful, who desire to gain a view of events as they really did happen, and as they are very likely, in accordance with human nature, to repeat themselves at some future time,—if not in exactly the same, yet in very similar fashion. And it is designed rather as a possession for ever than as a mere prize composition to be listened to for the moment.”—(I. 21, 22.)

The claim which the writer makes on behalf of his great work, boastful as it might seem, rested on a consciousness of power. He did but anticipate the calm judgment of posterity. Lord Lytton has called it “the eternal manual of statesmen,” and the great Earl of Chatham insisted on it as the one Greek book with which, whatever else might be neglected, his son must make himself familiar. Macaulay, who read and re-read it while he was writing his own great history, pronounces the author to be, “on the whole, the first of historians:” and his biographer tells us that “the sense of his own inferiority to Thucydides did more to put him out of conceit with himself than all the unfavourable comments bestowed upon him by the newspapers and reviews.”* The ‘History’ of Thucy-

* *Life and Letters*, ii. 237.

dides is indeed one of those "possessions for ever" in the great store-house of literature which has never lost its value. It may be doubted whether even the critical Athenian audience who first heard his manuscript read, were as much impressed by the genius of the author as the world of modern scholars is now, after the lapse of above two thousand years.

It is time to inquire who this great writer was, whose own confidence as to his future rank amongst historians was so largely justified. But here, as is so commonly the case with the early writers with whose names and works we are so familiar, the personality of the man himself escapes us. The days when every author, great or small, was to have his voluminous biography, had not yet come. Two so-called 'Lives' of Thucydides, of comparatively modern date, have come down to us; but they may both be referred to that class of "fabulous" narrative, "constructed to be pleasant," for which he had himself such keen contempt. This much only we can be said to know with any approach to accuracy as to his early life: that he was born about the year 471 B.C.; and that he was of Thracian descent (for his father's name, Olorus, is Thracian), though he was a citizen of Athens. We gather from his own pages that he possessed some hereditary property in gold-mines, in the district of Thrace known as *Scapté-Hylé* ("the excavated wood"), and that he saw considerable service himself as a divisional commander, in the great war of which he became the historian. He is said to have taken lessons in rhetoric, the popular study of the day, from Antiphon of Rhamnus, the inventor of oratory, as his

admirers termed him ; and competent critics have traced a correspondence of idioms, which is at least curious, in the extant orations of the master when compared with the set speeches which the pupil introduces so freely into his narrative of the war. He was certainly one of the great orator's warm admirers, for he characterises the defence made by Antiphon, when accused of treason to the State, as the ablest on record. The young Thucydides is also said to have sat with Pericles at the feet of the great philosopher Anaxagoras, the boldest free-thinker of the day ; and some hints occur here and there in his history of a contempt for the national superstitions, which are thought to savour of those unpopular opinions which led to Anaxagoras's fine and banishment. He was a sufferer—one of the few who completely recovered—from the great plague which almost depopulated Athens in the second year of the war, and of which he has left us such a full account.

The personal share which he took in the operations of the war, and his conduct as a general, will come before us in their proper place in the course of the history. His failure in the campaign in Thrace against Brasidas, whether it was his fault or only his misfortune, resulted in his banishment from Athens (or perhaps his voluntary exile to avoid a worse sentence) for twenty years. The locality of his exile is uncertain ; probably he moved from place to place. Part of the time seems, from some of his own expressions, to have been passed in the Peloponnese, within the borders of his enemies the Spartans ; and this gave him the opportunity of

judging the remaining operations of the war from the enemy's point of view. "It was my fate," he says, "to be an exile from my country for twenty years after the campaign against Amphipolis; and thus having been cognisant of the operations of both parties, and more especially of those of the Peloponnesians, by reason of my exile, I could calmly and at my leisure learn all I wanted about them." * Possibly this kind of neutral position which, as a banished man, the writer held between friend and foe, may have contributed to the impartiality as well as to the accuracy of his narrative. It was no doubt during that long period of enforced leisure that he digested the materials which, as appears from his own statement just quoted, he had already collected, and expanded his original notes (if we may use so modern a term) into a methodical history. But it was probably not completed in its present form until after his return from exile—when Athens had seen her Long Walls destroyed by the Spartans, and these successful rivals had wrested from her the leadership of Greece. Thucydides possibly returned with Thrasybulus when he freed Athens from the tyranny of the Thirty: certainly, from his own expressions, it was after the great war was ended. He is said to have met his death by assassination, either at Athens or in his own domain at Scapte Hylé. His tomb, with the brief inscription in a single line of verse,—"Here lies Thucydides the son of Olorus, of Halimus,"—was for some time shown at Athens. His age at the time of his death is left uncertain—probably about seventy.

* V. 26.

He left his work unfinished, after all. Something like a fourth part of the period which he intended it to embrace is left untouched. We know it as the 'History of the Peloponnesian War;' but the author did not live even to give it a name. Of the eight "books" into which his early editors have divided it, the seventh is thought never to have received his final corrections—if indeed this does not apply in less degree to the preceding books as well—and the eighth is left imperfect. So imperfect, that ancient literary gossip asserted that the daughter had put it together from her father's notes; whilst in other quarters the authorship was assigned to Xenophon, who has carried on the history where this eighth book leaves it, in his 'Hellenics.' One remarkable point in which the last book, as we have it, differs from the others, is in the total absence of those rhetorical and argumentative speeches which form so important a feature in Thucydides's work. It seems very probable that in all cases the speeches were composed and inserted by the author after the body of the history had been completed, and therefore are not to be found in this last and incomplete portion. It has indeed been asserted that they were here purposely omitted by Thucydides, because the public had pronounced them to be tedious: but such a verdict would scarcely have been in accordance with Athenian taste. It is evident that Thucydides himself, supposing him to have possessed the physical qualifications, would have made a consummate orator. Demosthenes must have held him to have been a master in the art, if there be any truth in the tradition

that for his own improvement he had copied out the historian's great work no less than eight times.

It is somewhat remarkable that Thucydides nowhere mentions or alludes to —unless it be under cover of his general strictures on the writers of the past—his great predecessor Herodotus. A story is briefly referred to by Suidas of the boy Thucydides having been present when Herodotus read his history in public at the Olympian games, and that he shed tears of emulation, with the tacit resolve to follow in his steps. But modern criticism has gone so far as to doubt whether he ever read, or heard of, Herodotus's researches. His own death probably very soon followed that of the earlier historian.

Whence he drew his materials, independent of personal memoranda and verbal information from contemporaries, we can very imperfectly guess. The written authorities must have been few. He mentions only Hecanæus, and of him he has no high opinion. The text of existing treaties, some of which he gives at length, and the memoirs of Cimon and Pericles, would probably be his most trustworthy authorities. It is possible that he may have met with his fellow-exile Alcibiades, and gained personal information from him.

The only division which he has himself made of his work is not into 'books,' as we now have it, but into those periods into which the story of the great struggle between Athens and Sparta, which distracted all Greece for twenty seven years, naturally falls: First, the ten years from the attack on Plataea by the Thebans (B.C. 431) to the "Peace of Nicias" (B.C. 421); secondly,

the next seven years of comparative suspension of hostilities; and lastly, the remaining period of the war—of which, however, he has left the last six years untouched. His work might perhaps be more fitly styled ‘Annals’ than ‘History:’ he gives the events of each year separately, dating them by the successive summers and winters. This plan spoils in some degree the effect of the narrative; the scene of operations is continually shifting; and he leaves a campaign or a siege at the very crisis of the interest, in order to bring up his arrears in other quarters. This arrangement has not been strictly adhered to in the following pages.

CHAPTER II.

PRELIMINARY HISTORY.

IT will be best to let the historian open his subject in his own words. He gives us no laboured introduction, but announces his theme and purpose, and his motives for undertaking his task, with a dignified simplicity.

“ Thucydides of Athens has written the story of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, how they warred with each other ; having begun his record from the very outset, expecting it to prove an important war, and more worthy of relation than any that had been before it ; forming this opinion both from the fact that both parties were perfectly equipped for it in every way, and seeing all the rest of Greece gathering to one side or the other, either by immediate action or by manifest intention. For this was the most important movement which had yet affected the Greeks, and indeed a large portion of the barbarian nations, and one might even say a great part of the world. For as to the wars which preceded this, and those of still earlier times, to ascertain the facts with any certainty seems impossible through lapse of time. But from such evidence as we have, so far as I am led to believe after

carrying my investigations as far back as possible, I do not think they could have been on a very extensive scale, either as to military operations or anything else."

He proceeds to give a brief summary of the early and half-mythical history of Greece—the first instance of an attempt to apply anything like critical examination to the mass of current legend. That the result should be quite satisfactory is not to be expected: that it should display so much of the true spirit of historical criticism is the wonder. If Thucydides accepts the story of the great Trojan war in all its essentials as an historical fact, he admits no more than all students of history have done until quite a modern date, and what many whose authority is by no means to be despised admit now. He holds that there was a great united expedition of Greeks, led by a real Agamemnon against a real Troy, and that this it was which first drew together the various tribes who occupied the Peloponnese and its neighbourhood, and gave them some kind of national cohesion. He even accepts the muster-roll of ships and men, as given in the *Iliad*, as an authentic record, and explains the length of the siege by the difficulty of maintaining so numerous a force without detaching a large portion to obtain supplies. But the importance of the expedition and of its operations has been magnified, he has no doubt, by the poets, and he considers it not worthy of comparison with the greater undertakings of later times.

The sketch which he gives of the ages before the Trojan expedition cannot be accepted as much more

than a clever guess, to be corrected by later investigations. It was impossible for him, as later historians with their greater advantages have found it, to sift with any very satisfactory result what Mommsen has happily termed "the rubbish-heap of tradition." He regards the Hellas, or Greece, of early times as overrun by migratory and restless tribes, who settled in such districts as they could conquer and hold, until driven out by a stronger people. They occupied, according to his view, rude hill-forts amongst the mountains, difficult of access, while they avoided the plain and the sea-shore, as liable at any moment to the attack of an enemy from land or sea. The most fertile lands—Bœotia, Thessaly, and the Peloponnese generally—were subject to the most frequent changes of inhabitants, because they held out stronger temptation to the invader: while Attica, with its poor and unproductive soil, was left in comparative quiet, and always in the occupation of the same people. Such, as is well known, was always the popular boast of the Athenians—that they were "sons of the soil." Hellen, the son of Deucalion, whence came the name of Hellenes—Pelops, the foreign chief who came from Asia and gave his name to the peninsula—and Minos, king of Crete, who established a navy, put down piracy, and colonised the islands, — are all treated as historical personages, though the distinctly fabulous elements of their story are passed over in silence. It is very possible that Thucydides, like the Roman historian Livy at a much later date, found the existing national belief in these rather mythical heroes too strong for him to

venture upon destructive criticism. To reject them altogether would have been to reject articles of the Greek faith. He may himself have retained a sort of half-conventional belief not only in their personality but in the legends with which it was surrounded.

It is from the return of the Greeks from the expedition to Troy that Thucydides would seem to date the historical annals of Greece. It was eighty years afterwards, according to his reckoning, that the great Dorian migration into the Peloponnese under the "sons of Hercules" took place: then Athens, the headquarters of the Ionian race, sent out her colonies, bearing their generic name, into the coasts and islands of the Archipelago, and so settled the district which went by the name of Ionia; while the Dorians from the Peloponnese threw off their companies of adventurers into Italy, Sicily, and the coasts of further Greece. Then came, as he considers, the advance of civilisation by the founding of navies—notably by the Corinthians, who by their position on the isthmus made their city the natural emporium of Greece; the increase of wealth, and the consequent rise of despotic governments, by the usurpation of some one powerful individual—"Tyrants," as the name went—in the several cities, instead of the old patriarchal and hereditary kings; until the great Dorian state of Sparta, or Lacedæmon, rising to a commanding position by reason of her long-established government, took upon her to vindicate the cause of liberty amongst her neighbours, and "put down the tyrants" in the several weaker states—Athens included. Then came the great Persian war, which

had already found its own historian in Herodotus, and on which his successor does not linger. But it was, as he notes, out of the results of this earlier war that the present, of which he is to write, had arisen. Lacedæmon had taken the lead in the second act of the Persian invasion (for the Athenians had abandoned their city at the Persians' approach), and she had thus become, from circumstances perhaps even more than from ambition, the chief of a kind of informal confederacy which embraced most of the Greek states. But Athens was as decidedly superior at sea as Lacedæmon was on land. Hence arose that bitter jealousy of each other - a jealousy strengthened by difference of race, of character, and of national habits - which led to a perpetual condition of hostilities more or less open between themselves and their several allies, from the final repulse of the Persians, B.C. 480, to the breaking out of the Peloponnesian war in 431.

Thucydides will presently give us what he notes as the actual causes of the rupture. But its roots lay deeper than any overt act. Lacedæmon had lost her supremacy over Greece and the islands; and Athens had won it. The history of this momentous change in the international relations of the several Greek states is reserved by our historian for a later page of his work;* but it will find its place more conveniently

* I. c. 89. "To follow the history in chronological order, a reader, after finishing Herodotus, should take up Thucydides at this 89th chapter, and read to the 117th inclusive: he should then go back to the 24th, and read on from thence to the 88th inclusive: after which he should proceed directly to the 118th." —Arnold.

here, when we are considering the remoter causes of the war.

When the Athenians had returned to their deserted city, they naturally proceeded to rebuild the fortifications which the enemy had destroyed. The Lacedæmonians were jealous. Walled towns, they said, were dangerous things: they might serve an enemy for a base of operations (as Thebes had in the late war), as well as protect their occupants; rather than rebuild their own walls, let the Athenians join in levelling the rest throughout Greece. But the leading man at Athens was still the Themistocles who had laid such stress upon the "wooden walls" in the first Persian invasion: and he was as determined upon retaining the stone walls now. Lacedæmon had no navy, but her infantry were the best in the world, and Athens was not to lie at their mercy—good friends as they seemed just now. He contrived that some months should be occupied in diplomatic messages to and fro: the Lacedæmonian commissioners were fêted and entertained at Athens, but on one pretence or other not allowed to return home with their report. Themistocles himself went as representative of Athens to Lacedæmon, and waited there—"expecting his colleagues," he said—until he heard that the walls were nearly completed. Then he appeared before the Lacedæmonian authorities, and told them plainly how matters stood:—

"Their city was now put in a sufficient state of defence, he said, to protect its occupants: and if the

Lawful citizens or their allies had access to and they refused there, in Athens, to those individuals that they were sending there to people who knew what was good for their own interests, as well as for the general interests of Greece. When it had seemed expedient to liberate their city and to surround their ships, they had found the Spartans very helpful, so that they thought. And in whatever steps they had taken to surround their ships, they had shown themselves to have as much sense, they thought, as other people. And of this passing time they said it just for them only to have a good ground to put forward for themselves both of their own citizens and of the allies in general. For it was impossible to give to individuals an advantageous vote as usual for the public business unless they could be paid in some way. And all the more for this, they ought to be paid, if they were found to have done what the Athenians had done to be right." (L. 91.)

Thucydides does not say upon himself in this place, as he so many others, to give us anything like the usual words of the speaker. He said not a word of course, but the good evidence — unless the speech had been recorded, which is a supposition. For Thucydides was very better to write his own facts, and it may give him in some measure to the general satisfaction of his readers of contemporary students, but how he is content with giving us only the general sense. We miss a good deal by not having the shrewdness and irony of the speaker more elaborately conveyed to us in the polished phrases of Thucydides. And so

Why, then, did the two women, who, though they did not yet meet in their youth, shared almost equal space at the time? Never lived in the same house? Could it be that their jealousy had been baffled?

The Greek people gradually united themselves under the leadership of Pericles, the Athenian statesman. The Athenians were the first to organize a navy, and this was the first step towards the power of Greece. The Athenians were the first to organize a navy, and this was the first step towards the power of Greece. The Athenians were the first to organize a navy, and this was the first step towards the power of Greece.

The Athenians soon arranged that all the allied
states should contribute towards the maintenance of a navy for the defence of
Greece. Such defence was still a strong necessity;
the Persians were still a great danger, and the
towns of Thrace and the Hellespont. This money they
took charge of, under the title of "Treasury of Greece,"
depositing it in the temple at Delos; whence it was
afterwards, and apparently without remonstrance,
transferred to the treasury of Athens.

smaller states which were allies in name became subjects in reality. If they failed to appear with their contingent when summoned,—if they declined to pay arrears of ships or money,—if they gave any cause of offence to their new leaders,—they were declared contumacious, and reduced to a state of undisguised dependency. The islands of Naxos, Thasos, and Eubœa successively revolted and were reduced; and every reduction of an independent ally to the position of a mere tributary increased the power of Athens. And from time to time the sufferers appealed to Lacedæmon for aid, which was given—willingly enough, it may be conceived—whenever there appeared a fair opening for regaining their own ascendancy; so that an intermittent succession of hostilities went on for twenty years. There had grown up in Greece by degrees two great rival interests and systems, of which Athens and Lacedæmon were the centres, each claiming a kind of rule over the subordinate states, and even the right to punish any breach of such relation on their parts. But Athens met with her reverses in turn, when she took part in the internal feuds of the Peloponnese: and when a truce of thirty years was agreed upon between the two great rivals, Athens had to give up the ports she had acquired on the Corinthian gulf, and to lose altogether her hold on the peninsula.

CHAPTER III.

CAUSES OF THE WAR.

THE truce which bore the name of the "Thirty Years" lasted barely fourteen. They were years of activity and prosperity, and of accumulating wealth and power, for Athens, all which was watched with natural alarm by her neighbour and rival. Samos, perhaps the most powerful of all the states in the Athenian league, revolted and was reduced, and another island fleet thus added to the Athenian navy. The tribute paid by the several dependent states was gradually increased, and they had to go to Athens for arbitration in all cases of dispute among themselves. Her rule, from that of a leader amongst equals, had become an imperial government, but there is nothing to show that it was oppressive or unjust. The master-mind in the city was Pericles, who had large views for the future of his country. He had raised the material grandeur of the city itself to such a pitch, that Thucydides says that if the stranger of some distant future should come to look upon her ruins, "he would estimate her power to have been even double what it was."

Perhaps the ablest and bitterest enemy of the

Athenian rule was Corinth. She was the earliest naval power in Greece, and Athens had eclipsed her. Her position on "the two seas" gave her great commercial opportunities, and Athens, by her occupation of Megara and its ports (though she had had to give these up), had interfered with her. From Corinth one of the overt causes of the breaking out of the great war arose. Settlers from Corinth had colonised the island of Coreyra (Corfu); and Coreyra in its turn had thrown off a fresh swarm of colonists to Epidamnus, on the coast of Illyria.* In this new settlement, one of the usual feuds between nobles and commons led to an appeal on the one side to Coreyra, and on the other to Corinth as their common ancestress: and Corinth, already jealous of the Coreyraeans as having shown too little deference to the mother state, at once prepared for war against her refractory daughter. After some vain attempt at negotiations, a severe engagement took place between the two fleets, in which the colonists (who mustered no less than a hundred and twenty sail) were victorious. But they felt that, standing alone as they did, belonging to neither of the great confederacies, they should be no match for Corinth in a prolonged struggle: they appealed for aid to Athens, and asked to be admitted into her confederacy. The Athenians were unwilling, by an act of overt hostility, to break the thirty years' truce with the Peloponnesians: and this they thought to avoid by concluding with Coreyra a defensive alliance only. "They foresaw," says Thucydides, "that in any case

* Called by the Romans Dyrrhachium—the modern Durazzo.

a war with the Peloponnesians they must have ; and they did not care to let Coreyra, with so large a naval force, fall into the hands of the Corinthians, but preferred that the two powers should wear themselves out as much as possible against each other, that so they might find the Corinthians and other naval states all the weaker when they went to war with them, if such necessity should arise."

A squadron of ten ships was sent to Coreyra, with orders not to act against the Corinthians except in defence of the island. Such orders are seldom very strictly obeyed. In a sea-fight which followed, the Athenian contingent ranged itself in line of battle with the Coreyræans, and when they saw their friends hard pressed, fairly charged the victorious enemy. "Such was the first ground of rupture between the Corinthians and Athenians—that the latter had, in time of truce, fought against them on the side of the Coreyræans."

Another act of aggression was charged against them in the matter of Potidæa, a Corinthian settlement on the Isthmus of Pallene in Thrace, but now in alliance with Athens. The Athenians had reason to know that this doubtful ally, at the instigation of the king of Macedon (and they believed of the Corinthians also), was meditating revolt ; and they anticipated the danger which might have involved the defection of all their dependencies in that quarter by a peremptory summons to pull down part of their wall, dismiss the Corinthian magistrates, and give hostages for their fidelity. A strong naval and land force was sent to

enforce these demands. The Potidæans refused them, and declared their independence. Aid was sent to them at once from Corinth; but the Athenian commander drove the relieving force inside the walls, and strictly blockaded Potidæa by land and sea. And hence arose a second case, alleged by both parties, of a direct breach of the existing treaties: the Corinthians making it ground of complaint that the Athenians had attacked a colony of theirs; and Athens on her part asserting that the Peloponnesians had tampered with one of their allies and tributaries, excited them to revolt, and aided them with force of arms. "But not yet," says the historian, "had war actually broken out; there was still a pause before the conflict, for the Corinthians had acted on their own independent account."

But now they appeared by their envoys at Lacedæmon, and there, in a general congress to which the representatives of all the confederate states were summoned, publicly accused Athens of having broken the terms of the truce. Megara and Ægina were equally loud in complaint. An embassy had also just arrived from Athens on other business, and was allowed to be present at the debate. Our author gives at some length the orations delivered, or which might have been delivered, by the representatives of both interests. The deputies from Corinth reserved their special act of accusation until the last, after the other complainants had been heard, in order to give full effect to their denunciation. Their exordium is an example of the acknowledged rule in rhetoric—to begin by gaining, if possible, the favour of the court:—

“Your own good faith, men of Lacedæmon, in your internal politics and in your dealings with your neighbours, makes you naturally inclined to give less credit to any accusation we have to prefer against others; and this same character, while it makes you temperate in your judgment, leaves you more ignorant than you ought to be of what is going on elsewhere.”

The encroachments of Athens upon the liberties of Greece, they went on to say, had long been notorious. They were bold to assert that for this Lacedæmon herself was somewhat to blame, as having allowed Athens to rebuild her walls, and tacitly permitted her to override her weaker neighbours. The orator is very plain-spoken as to the duties of strong neutral powers:—

“It is not the state which actually destroys the liberty of others, but the state which has the power to prevent this and will not use it, which is really guilty; especially when it enjoys an honourable reputation as the deliverer of Greece. . . . We know well by what roads and with what gradual approaches Athens moves upon her neighbours. So long as she fancies she can escape detection owing to your apathetic nature, she will not venture too far; but when she feels that though you see her designs you take no notice, then she will urge them forward with the strong hand. For you, Lacedæmonians, are the only power in all Greece who sit inactive, defending yourselves against your enemies not by prompt exercise of strength but

by mere demonstration, and who proceed to crush the growth of a hostile power, not in its early stages but in its full development. Yet you used to be reckoned men to be depended on, whereas this character rests rather on repute than on fact. For we know ourselves that the Mede had marched from the ends of the earth upon the Peloponnese, before you were ready to meet him in any adequate force : and now these Athenians, who are not, like the Mede, far away, but close at hand, you take no heed of ; but instead of taking the first step against them, you prefer waiting to defend yourselves when they attack you, and to risk everything by postponing the struggle until they shall have become far stronger than they are now. . . . Let no one think this language is spoken in enmity -it is in remonstrance : we may remonstrate even with our friends, when they make mistakes ; accusation is for the enemies who have wronged us."

If the Corinthian spokesman really "dealt so faithfully" with his hearers, and if the Lacedæmonians listened to his utterances as to the wise words of a friend, it was creditable to the honesty of both, and stands out in favourable contrast with very much of modern political oratory. But it may be possible for a reader, without incurring the charge of needless scepticism, to fancy that he discerns the strictures of an Athenian statesman put into the mouth of the Corinthian envoy. So when, a little further on, the orator goes on to estimate and criticise the dangerous enemies with whom they would soon have to deal, we might

fancy that we detect the subtle irony which implies praise under cover of censure. The Athenians, says their accuser—

“Are bold beyond their strength, venturous even against their judgment, sanguine in the midst of danger ; while your wont is to let your deeds fall below your powers, in judgment scarcely to trust even to certainties, and in danger never to entertain a hope of escape. Verily they are as prompt as you are dilatory, as fond of foreign expeditions as you are of home ; for they think they may gain somewhat by going abroad, you fancy that by such expeditions you may even risk what you have. When they are victorious over their enemy, they follow up their success to the utmost, and when beaten they least lose heart. . . . When they fail in a design, they look upon themselves as robbed of their just due ; when they succeed in making an acquisition, they hold it trifling compared with what they intend shall follow. . . . They have little enjoyment of what they have, because they are always busy getting more ; their only idea of a festival is the discharge of a duty, and they consider inactive leisure a greater infliction than laborious occupation. In short, one might very fairly sum up their character by saying that they were born to have no rest themselves, nor to allow their neighbours to have any.” — (I. 68-71.)

The speaker ended by calling on the Lacedæmonians to deliver Potidæa, and thus maintain their high posi-

tion in Greece—"the noble inheritance which their fathers had bequeathed to them."

Then the Athenian envoys asked permission to speak. Not in reply to the accusation, they said—for they did not admit the jurisdiction of that court—but on the general question. Greece had no need to fear them—and much reason to be proud of them. Had they all forgotten Marathon and Salamis? Were the Lacedæmonians jealous of their dominion? It was a greatness that had been thrust upon them in the first instance; they had but accepted the leadership of Greece at the request of the Greeks themselves. But, granted that they did not care to retire from this position, now that they had once attained it,—was there anything unnatural in that? And if the states now dependent on Athens were to change their masters, and come under the power of some others they could name, would their position be improved?

"Do not resolve, then, hastily, for this is no mere question of the moment; do not be led away by other people's fancies and complaints, and so bring trouble on yourselves; but consider, before you involve yourselves in it, how very apt war is to disappoint all calculations, and how, when protracted, its results come to depend mainly upon fortune, which is beyond the control of either party, and whose event both have to risk in the dark. When men have to contend with an enemy, they are too apt to begin with action, which should be the last resort; and only when they get into difficulties they apply themselves to negotiation. But we have not yet taken this false step, nor do we see

that you have; and we adjure you, while prudent counsels are still within the choice of both, not to violate the treaty or break your oaths, but to let the points in dispute be settled by arbitration, in accordance with the terms. Or else, calling to witness the gods who received our oaths, we will try to meet you if you begin hostilities, on whatever path you lead the way."—(I. 78.)

The representatives of the confederate states were ordered to withdraw, that the Lacedæmonians might deliberate among themselves in council.* The majority of the voices were for immediate war; but Archidamus, second of that name, who was then one of the two kings, urged upon them milder counsels. He was old enough, he said, to have seen something of war, and he knew what it was. He knew also the strength of Athens. They were no match for her in resources — especially in ships and money. In heavy infantry, no doubt, they were superior; but heavy infantry could not be employed everywhere. "Let us not buoy ourselves up," he warns them, "with that delusive hope that, if we do but lay waste their lands, the war will soon be over; I rather fear that we may leave it as a heritage to our children." Let them try negotiation first; meanwhile, let them improve their revenue, and make good preparation for war if it must come.

* The subordinate states in the Spartan confederacy seem to have been allowed only to give their several votes in these conventions either in confirmation or rejection of a measure proposed by Sparta.

The debate was closed by Sthenilaidas, one of the Ephors, and who in that capacity had to take the votes, in a speech of true Spartan brevity, which we may well conceive as having been actually spoken. It is perhaps the only instance in which any distinct peculiarity of style, national or individual, appears in any of these orations:—

“The long harangue of the Athenians I do not understand: they praised themselves a good deal, but they never denied they had wronged our allies and the Peloponnese generally. And if they did show themselves good men and true in past days against the Medes, yet show themselves bad men towards us now, why, they deserve double punishment, for having turned from good to bad. But we are the same men now that we were then; and if we be wise, we shall not see our allies wronged, or put off avenging them; for they cannot put off their suffering. Others may have plenty of money, and ships, and horses; we have trusty allies, whom we are not to sacrifice to the Athenians, or leave the question to arbitration and talk—it is not by talk that we are being injured—but avenge them at once with all speed and with all our might. And let no man tell me that, when we are wronged, we must consider about it: it is more fitting for people to consider—and consider a long time, too—before they do a wrong. Vote for war, then, Lacedæmonians, as befits the honour of Sparta; and do not let the Athenians increase their power, nor let us desert our allies, but put our trust in the gods, and march at once against these wrong doers.”—(l. 86.)

War was voted, by a large majority—"not so much," says Thucydides, "because they had been convinced by the arguments of their allies, as because they feared the growing power of Athens." They next sent to Delphi to consult the oracle; and the answer, as reported, ran to this effect: "If they made war with all their might, the victory should be theirs; and that the god himself would help them, whether they summoned him or not."

In accordance with the constitution of the Spartan League, the subject-allies were now called upon to confirm or reject the decision. They were convoked at Delos; and again envoys came from Corinth to reiterate their appeal. Again they inveighed against the growing ambition of Athens, and prophesied success if all did but co-operate against her vigorously; but operations must be immediate to be effectual, for Potidæa was in danger of falling every day.

The votes of the confederate states were taken in succession, and the majority were for war. They were unprepared for immediate action, but they undertook to provide their several contingents with as little delay as might be.*

* It may be well to note in this place the chief allies and dependants of both parties during the war. On the side of Athens—the islands of the Archipelago and its neighbourhood generally (except Melos and Thera, which were neutral), and of Coreyra and Zacynthus; the Ionian colonies on the coast of Asia Minor; and the towns of Platea and Naupactus in Greece itself. On the side of Lacedæmon—the whole of the Peloponnese except Argos and Achaia (neutral), Mégara, Bœotia, Locris, Phocis, &c., in Greece proper.

CHAPTER IV.

OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES.

It was full a year after the Lacedæmonians had decided upon war that hostilities actually began. They sent repeated embassies to Athens with complaints; not so much, says the historian, with a view to arranging the dispute, as "in order that they might show as good cause as possible for going to war, if the Athenians would not listen to them."

Both parties had invoked the aid of the gods in what each protested was the cause of right and justice. Both now sought to put their adversaries in the wrong on the religious ground. The Lacedæmonians sent a solemn demand to the Athenians "to purge themselves from the breach of sanctuary in the matter of Cylon." It was an old story, dating back nearly two hundred years. This Cylon, with a body of partisans, had seized the Acropolis of Athens with the view of setting up a despotism; had failed, and made his escape. But some of his adherents had taken sanctuary at the altar of Minerva in the citadel, had been tempted from there by the promise of safety, and afterwards put to death. The parties implicated in this sacrilegious

proceeding had been banished, but afterwards allowed to return; and the demand now was—avowedly in deference to the national religious feeling of Greece—that the descendants of this accursed race should at once be expelled from Athens. But the real object of disinterring such a question at this moment was, no doubt, as Thucydides considers it to have been, to call upon Athens for the expulsion of her ablest citizen and most earnest advocate of resistance. Pericles, by his mother's side, was descended from the great house of Alcmaeon, who were implicated in the charge. It was not probable that Athens would comply with the demand; and here would be another pretext for war, under a religious sanction.

The Athenians were not slow in retorting. They had even a double-edged weapon of the kind to bring to bear against their enemies. There was the notorious case of Sparta's great hero, Pausanias, whom—guilty or not guilty of the treason imputed to him—his countrymen had starved to death in the "Brazen House" of Minerva. There was the case, too, of the rebel Helots who had been forcibly dragged from the shrine of Neptune at Tænarus and put to death—an act which the Spartans themselves confessed had been punished by an earthquake, sent by the great "Earth-shaker;" let them now drive out of their city the families of all concerned in these notorious acts of sacrilege, if they would go to war with clean hands.

The Lacedæmonians sent an embassy to offer terms to Athens. If they would raise the siege of Potidæa—if they would restore the independence of Ægina—

if they would rescind the decree which excluded all Megareans, on pain of death, from Athenian ports and markets—and if they would undertake in the future to respect the independence of the weaker allies,—then peace might be still maintained. This was refused; and then they sent their ultimatum, couched in the briefest and most haughty terms—Let Athens declare the independence of all the Greeks, and there might yet be peace.

These terms were discussed in full assembly at Athens. Opinions were divided, until Pericles, son of Xanthippus, “the foremost man in Athens at that time, both in eloquence and practical ability,” came forward and spoke. It may be here observed that Thucydides gives us scarcely anything that can be called a character, or even the briefest biographical notice, of the great men who play such important parts in his history. He introduces them to us, as in this passage, in the fewest possible words; and he dismisses them sometimes—notably in this case of Pericles—with even less formality. This may be partly owing to the fact that he was writing, in the first instance, for a generation contemporary with the events he narrates, and to whom the characters in the story, their personal history and their habits of life, were all well known. But the omission of such notices, absolutely necessary as they are in order to appreciate the influence of such men upon the domestic and foreign history of their country, and which the modern reader has to gather as he may from other sources, is especially remarkable in an author who declares at the outset that he is

writing not for cotemporaries only, but for all posterity.

Pericles, of whom he tells us at once so much and so little, had now been the virtual ruler of the Athenian people for above thirty years, and was to hold that position, with only what may be called accidental interruptions, for yet some few years more. Virtual ruler,—for his power, which was at one period greater than that of any man before or since in Athens, rested only on a tacit recognition of his supremacy, and not on any legal or constitutional grounds. He was neither archon nor member of the great Court of Areopagus : he was but a young man of good family who had gained an ascendancy in the state, partly at first by the popularity and influence inherited from his father Xanthippus, but mainly by his own consummate abilities. His position in the state may be not inaptly, though not quite accurately, compared with that of an English commoner who, with a good introduction to public life, has been raised by the voice of the nation to the Premiership—and who may at any time, by a sudden change in that voice, have to retire into the ranks again. All authorities are agreed in describing the personal qualifications of Pericles as having been remarkable. In person he was compared to the god-like Peisistratus : his head was said to be as beautiful as that of the statues of Bacchus, or even as Jupiter himself—though his enemies, alluding to some slight deformity, said that it must, then, be an “onion-headed” Jupiter. Statesman, soldier, and philosopher, a man of highly cultivated tastes and varied accom-

plishments, he represented well the Athens which he "had found of brick and left of marble." And, however he may be indebted to Thucydides for much of the oratory put into his mouth in this 'History of the War,' it is certain that his own eloquence was of the most commanding order.

It was he who now came forward to urge upon the wavering Assembly an uncompromising refusal of the Peloponnesian demands, as the only course consistent with the honour of Athens. To arbitration they might have consented; but this was sheer dictation. "Any demand which an equal insists upon enforcing on a neighbour, before offering to submit it to arbitration, means nothing more or less than subjection, be such demand great or small." They had the advantage of their adversaries in wealth, in unity of counsels, and above all in their fleet. Only let no exasperation which they might feel at the probable devastation of their territory tempt them to meet the enemy's land forces in a general engagement: there, they would be no match for them. Let them look upon themselves in the light of islanders, and guard well the sea and their capital. He foresaw more danger from their own schemes of foreign conquest than from the present enemy.

This warlike speech was received with acclamation, and the Lacedæmonian ultimatum rejected. And soon the war began in earnest, though as yet hostile operations were strictly local. The town of Plataea lay within the territory of Boeotia, of which Thebes was the leading state: but ever since the great day of

the battle to which it gave its name, it had continued the faithful and honoured ally of Athens, but with its independence guaranteed by the national gratitude of all the Greek states. But it was only natural that the Thebans should have been always jealous of this little "state within a state;" especially since the fact of this independence and alliance with Athens was a standing memorial of Theban weakness—or worse—in betraying the interest of Greece in her struggle with Persia. An attempt was now made by Thebes to detach Plataea forcibly from the Athenian protectorate, and absorb it into the Boeotian league. A party of three hundred Thebans, admitted under cover of night by some friends within, tried to make themselves masters of the place: they failed, the majority were taken prisoners, and put to death in cold blood. The cruelty was nothing very exceptional in those times; but in this particular case, a breach of faith was alleged against the men of Plataea, and the Athenians (to whom, on the first alarm, an appeal for aid had been despatched) had even sent—too late—to desire that the prisoners might not be dealt with till their arrival. They at once garrisoned the town, as a siege by the enraged Thebans was imminent.

Both confederacies now prepared for a war whose area and proportions none could undertake to limit. The Peloponnesian Greeks even thought of sending to ask aid of the national enemy—"the King," as the Persian monarch was always termed by those who had little acquaintance with monarchies. Thucydides

describes the intense expectation which prevailed throughout peninsular and continental Greece:—

“No operations on a small scale were in the thought of either party, but they braced themselves for war in earnest. And not unnaturally: for men are always most eager at starting, and at that date there was a large body of youth growing up in the Peloponnese, and in Athens too, who took to war enthusiastically, as having had no experience of it. And all the rest of Greece looked on in anxious expectation at this conflict between its two principal states. Many prophecies were quoted, and the soothsayers gave out a great many oracular verses, both in the states which were going to war and in the others. There had been an earthquake in Deles, moreover, a little before, though the island had never previously felt a shock within the memory of the Greeks: and this was said—and indeed it so seemed—to be a warning of what was to happen. And anything else of the kind which took place was all hunted up for the occasion. The public feeling all ran in favour of the Lacedæmonians, especially as they gave themselves out as the liberators of Greece. Individuals and states alike, all did their best to help them, both by word and deed, in every way they could: and every one thought matters were going all wrong where he could not be present in person. So exasperated were almost all of them against the Athenians, some from the desire to be freed from their rule, others from fear of being brought under it.” (II. 8.) And they all thought,

as the writer tells us in a later part of his work,* that two or three campaigns at most would see the end of that hated dominion, if the allied troops ravaged, as they could easily do, her territory season after season.

Is it because Athens appears to have been thus singly matched against almost all Greece in arms, or is it from an unconscious sympathy with the Athenian historian, fairly impartial as he is acknowledged to be—or because of the final result of the struggle, or from something of that “insularity” of feeling in ourselves which Pericles tried to impress on his countrymen,—that as we read, we nearly all of us become partisans of Athens?

Two-thirds of the regular contingent from each of the Peloponnesian confederates were under orders to assemble at the Isthmus for an invasion of Attica, where they were briefly harangued by the Spartan king Archidamus. A herald was sent in the last resort to Athens, but was escorted back to the frontier that same evening without an audience, —“the Athenians would listen to an envoy when the enemy had quitted their soil.” He turned to his escort, as he crossed the border, with the ominous words, adapted from the great national poet, “This day will be the beginning of much woe to the Greeks.”†

Archidamus, after all, proceeded with almost more than Spartan caution; dilatoriness, many of his allies called it. The real explanation, as Thucydides thinks, was that he still believed that, in view of the imme-

* VII. 28.

† Homer, *Iliad*, I. 2

diate ravaging of their lands, the Athenians would give way. He wasted precious time before the little stronghold of CEnoe, waiting for some message to this effect. They had no such thought; or, if any of them had, they were overborne by the strong spirit of Pericles. He laid before them the statistics of their resources: a yearly income from the tribute paid by the allies of say £140,000; a reserve in the Acropolis of a million and a quarter; in public possessions of uncoined gold and silver, something like £130,000. A very small revenue in the eyes of a modern financier, but doubtless considerable for a Greek state in those early times. Their army—including what we should call the “reserve” forces, fit only for garrison duty—amounted to barely 32,000. A small German principality in our own times would have boasted a larger force. But we must remember that this estimate may safely be doubled in the actual number of men; for each heavy-armed foot soldier had his shield-bearer, and each horseman his groom. Military strength is relative, in all ages; and perhaps no modern state maintains so large a force, in proportion to its population, as Athens at this time. They had a fleet of 300 war galleys (each carrying about 300 men), and on those they chiefly depended.*

The Athenian rural population prepared at once to quit their farms and homesteads, and abandon to the invader all the property which could not be carried away. Their cattle and sheep they sent across to

* The population of Athens at this period has been estimated roughly at 500,000. She had something like 60,000 men, in all, on foreign service in the early part of the war.

Eubœa and the adjacent islands; their wives and children, their portable chattels – even the framework of their houses – they carried with them into the city. How far this was an act of national self-devotion, so far as the masses were concerned, or how far they acted under a kind of moral compulsion from Pericles and the more powerful and influential urban residents, it is impossible to say. There is abundant evidence that it was a grievous trial. “They had been accustomed always to a country life, much more than the other Greeks,” says our historian; “they suffered great hardship in the removal, especially as they had but lately restored their tenements after the Persian war.”

“They went with heavy hearts, and took it hard to have to leave their homes and holy places, which had belonged to their fathers before them, time out of mind, under the old constitution; having to change all their habits of life, and thus to leave what was to each one of them nothing less than their native country. And when they had got into the city, some few had houses there, or found refuge with friends or relatives; but the great number of them had to seek quarters in the vacant parts of the city, and in the precincts of temples and shrines of heroes, except the Acropolis and the temple of Eleusinian Ceres, and other places that were rigidly closed.” *—(II. 16, 17.)

* For some humorous details of the shifts to which the newcomers were reduced, the reader may refer to the “Knights” of Aristophanes, where some are represented as having to take up their abode in hen-coops and pigeon-holes.

One forbidden portion of ground was built upon by these new immigrants, in spite of the warning of an ancient oracle that "the Pelasgicon were best uninhabited." This is the only instance, except that of an old prediction popularly quoted at the beginning of this war, — that it should last three nine years,* — in which the writer seems to admit any genuine correspondence between the prediction and the event; and even here he philosophically traces the result not to the occupation of forbidden ground, but to the general overcrowding.

It was nearly three months after the failure of the Thebans at Plataea that Archidamus led his forces into Athenian territory; and by that time the country people had secured all their movable property within the city walls. But the corn was just ripe, and the crop of olives coming on, and all were destroyed, almost within sight of the owners. The invaders lingered some time in the district of Acharnae, less than eight miles from Athens, in the hope either of drawing out the Athenian forces to defend one of their richest and strongest out-settlements, or of driving the Acharnians themselves to disaffection, when they saw the apparent apathy shown by their countrymen to their personal sufferings. But Pericles held the Athenians well in hand. Though the younger men chafed and clamoured to be led into the field, he would not permit an Assembly to be called even to deliberate on the question of marching out, and was content to hear himself now called "the author of all their calamities." It was not till their

* V. 26.

commissariat failed that the invading force withdrew, and disbanded to their several cities.

The Athenians in their turn entered upon the aggressive, sending a powerful fleet of a hundred and fifty galleys to make descents upon the coast of the peninsula. Amongst other places they attacked the strong position at Methone (Modon), on the south-west corner of Laconia, but which was at this time but weakly fortified and garrisoned. But a Lacedæmonian officer happened to be in the neighbourhood who was to play a short but brilliant part in this war; who was soon to be personally matched in the field against Thucydides himself; and whose conduct was to have no little influence on the historian's future fortunes. Brasidas,—the favourite hero of one of our most successful students of ancient history, Arnold of Rugby—and who seems a favourite with Thucydides also, so far as that feeling can be said to exist in his cold judgment, Brasidas cut his way with a hundred men through the besiegers, and saved the place; the first man, says Thucydides, who received the public thanks of Sparta (not much given to such recognitions) for good service in this war. The Athenians took signal vengeance on the islanders of Ægina, whose demand for independence they regarded as one of the chief causes of the war. They cleared them all off, and settled the island with colonists of their own; and the unfortunate natives had to migrate into a territory assigned them by the Lacedæmonians on the frontier between themselves and that of Argolis. The other hated neighbour of Athens, Megara, was swept by an

overwhelming land and sea force under Pericles in person; and for some years afterwards the visit was repeated by the Athenians year by year, as regularly as the enemy's forces made their raid upon the corn-fields and olive-grounds of Attica.

Early in the winter of this year, at the close of the campaign, the Athenians held their public funeral of those citizens who had fallen in the war. It was a striking national ceremony, probably dating as far back as the close of the great Persian wars. Here is the description of it:—

“They lay out the bones of the slain three days previously in a tent erected for the purpose, and each family bring for their own dead any offering they please. When the time comes for carrying them forth to burial, sarcophagi made of cypress-wood are placed on cars, one for each tribe; in these are laid the bones of each man, according to the tribe to which he belonged; and one bier is carried empty, spread with funeral garments, for the missing, whose bones could not be collected to be brought home. Any one who will, citizen or sojourner, joins in the procession; and the women of the family are present at the funeral, to make their lament for the dead. So they lay them in the public cemetery, which is in the fairest suburb of the city; and there do they always bury those who fall in battle, excepting those who died at Marathon—those heroes they buried there, where they fell, as judging their valour to have been exceptional. And when they lay them in the ground, some citizen selected

by the state, as of proved ability and distinguished reputation, pronounces over them a fitting panegyric ; after which all withdraw. In such fashion do they bury them ; and all through this war, whenever they had the opportunity, they observed this custom.”—(II. 34.)

The speaker chosen on this occasion was Pericles himself. We know, from other sources, that he had performed this duty at least once before—after the reduction of Samos. He now mounted the platform arranged for the purpose, so that his voice might be heard as far as possible by the assembled multitude, and delivered an oration which, as it stands in the pages of Thucydides, is admitted to be one of the finest of those grand rhetorical declamations which were the glory of Athenian orators and the delight of their audience. The arrangement and structure of the sentences, and much of the language, are no doubt the historian's own. But it may be safely assumed that he was present at the delivery, that his admiration of the speaker would have held him in rapt attention, and that his preconceived determination to become the historian of the war would lead him to preserve as much as possible both of the argument and the language—possibly in the shape of notes, certainly from his own recollection and that of others. And memory, it must be allowed, is always most retentive where written records are scarce. We are told, indeed, if we may trust the authority of Cicero, whose assertion may rest upon accurate tradition, that Pericles wrote his

speeches. If this were the case, the historian might have had in his hands a copy. The speaker begins by declaring that no words — certainly not *his* words — can do justice to the actions of the dead; they are beyond all praise of men. Nor will he dwell now on that well worn topic, the glories of their ancestors. He will speak rather of their internal polity.

“First, let me set forth, before I proceed with my oration, what has been the course of training by which we gained our present position, and what the political constitution and habits of life which have made our greatness. For I think this is a topic not unbefitting the occasion, and one which this whole assembly, citizens and strangers alike, will do well to listen to.

“The constitution we enjoy is no imitation from our neighbours — we claim to be rather a model to others than a copy from them. It bears the name of democracy, because our institutions are for the good of the many, not of the few. In the matter of legal rights, every man stands on the same footing in all private suits in our courts: in the matter of position and reputation, according as a man distinguishes himself in any line of life, so he rises to public honours, not by social caste so much as by merit. Nor is any man excluded on the ground of poverty, by the obscurity of his rank, so he be able to do the state good service. As we live under free institutions in our public life, so in our private daily intercourse with each other we cultivate no spirit of jealousy, nor quarrel with our neighbour because he follows his own tastes, nor cast looks at him intended

to annoy if they cannot punish. While we thus practise forbearance in private intercourse, in public matters we have a thorough fear of licence, hearkening to the constituted authorities and to the laws, especially such as are ordained for the protection of the injured, and to those which, though never formally enacted, all men hold it shame to violate.

“Yet amidst our graver occupations we provide abundant relaxation for the spirits, in the public games and sacrifices which we hold year by year, and in the splendour of our private establishments, in the daily enjoyment of which we banish care. And because of the greatness of this our city, all abundance from all lands comes in to us ; and it is our happy lot to enjoy the good things of foreigners not less familiarly than the products of our own soil.

“In our military training we present a contrast to our opponents in these points. We throw our city open to all the world. We have no regulations which exclude the foreigner from full investigation and inspection, for fear lest an enemy may profit by the knowledge ; * for we trust not so much to crafty precautions as to our intrinsic valour in action. In our educational training, while some nations aim at forming a warlike spirit by laborious discipline from the earliest years, we, with all our easy life, can face dangers as great, and as boldly, as they can. The facts prove it: the Lacedæmonians never venture on an expedition against our territory with a division only of their army,

* Referring to the Alien Acts (if they may be so termed) by which Sparta jealously guarded herself.

but with their whole force; but when we Athenians unsupported invade our neighbours' territory, we commonly get the best of it, and that easily, though on a hostile soil and against men who are fighting for their homes. Indeed, our collective force no enemy has ever yet engaged, because we have at once to maintain our naval armament and to despatch our troops to so many different quarters on land. But whenever they engage a division of our army, if they beat a detachment they claim to have repulsed our whole force, and to have been defeated by our whole force if they get the worst of it. And surely, if we are willing to face the perils of war out of our careless ease rather than after a painful training, and with a courage that springs from character rather than from regulation, we have this advantage: we never distress ourselves beforehand about perils to come, yet we show ourselves, when we have to face them, fully as brave as others who are always toiling.

“I say our state is to be admired for this, and yet for more than this. We cultivate refinement without extravagance, and philosophy without effeminacy; we value wealth for its practical advantages, not as a thing for boastful display; and it is not the confession of poverty that we hold disgraceful, but rather the not setting ourselves to work to escape from it.

“With us, men are expected to attend to their public as well as to their private duties; even those engaged in manual labour have a competent knowledge of political questions; and we alone, if a man takes no part in such questions, instead of excusing him as being ‘no meddler,’ despise him as being no good citizen. As a

body, we can all judge of public measures at least, if we cannot originate them ; and we do not hold that discussion hinders action, but that the greater hindrance is not to have discussed and understood a measure before we have to carry it out. For I consider we possess in an eminent degree this characteristic,—we are at once bold in conception and careful in the calculation of our plans ; whereas in general, ignorance leads men to venture, while calculation makes them hesitate. And those may be rightly adjudged most courageous in spirit, who, with the fullest appreciation of all that is pleasant as well as all that is hard, yet never for that reason shrink from danger. In our estimate of merit, too, we differ from the world in general ; we make our friends not by receiving benefits but by conferring them. The party who confers a kindness is like to prove the more constant friend : he seeks by kindness to keep alive the sense of obligation in the party benefited ; while he who lies under the obligation is not so eager about it, feeling that all he does in return will be reckoned matter of debt and not of favour. And we are the only people who unhesitatingly give aid where needed, not so much from calculations of interest as from the confidence of a liberal spirit.

“ I assert, in short, that our whole polity is a school for Greece ; while, if we come to individuals, it is amongst us that the same man shows all personal qualifications for the most varied parts in life, with the most accomplished versatility. That this is no mere vaunting talk for the occasion, but the simple truth of facts, the very power which this state enjoys, and

which it has reached through such a line of conduct, gives proof enough. For ours is the only state which, when brought to the test, rises higher than its reputation; the only one which leaves an invading enemy no mortification at having been worsted at such hands, and gives no subject room to complain that he is governed by unworthy masters. We have given abundant justification for our supremacy: we have not left ourselves without witness; we shall win the adulation both of our own and future generations. We need no Homer to praise us, nor any poet to charm by his verse for the moment, whilst plain facts will afterwards belie the impression thus formed of our deeds. We shall have made every sea and every shore accessible to our daring, and shall have founded everywhere imperishable memorials of our power alike to benefit and to punish. Such is the state for which our friends have fought and died, determined that she should never be wrested from them: and we their survivors will surely be ready, every one of us, to suffer for her too."—(II. 36-41.)

This public funeral must, from the necessity of things, have been rather a commemorative service for those who had fallen in battle, in the majority of cases, than an actual interment of their ashes. Few comparatively were the cases in which the remains of the slain could in any shape have been brought back to Athens. The very boast of the orator, that every known sea and shore bore witness to

Athenian enterprise, tells where she had buried her dead :—

“ Their graves were severed far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.”

The orator makes use of this fact as he goes on.

“ They gave their lives for their country, and gained for themselves a glory that can never fade, a tomb that shall stand as a mark for ever. I do not mean that in which their bodies lie, but that in which their renown lives after them, to be remembered for ever on every occasion of speech or action which calls it to mind. For the whole earth is the grave and monument of heroes ; it is not the mere graving upon marble in their native land which sets forth their deeds, but even in lands where they were strangers, there lives an unwritten record in every heart, felt though never embodied.”

The orator concludes with words of condolence for the sorrowing relatives. They do not rise perhaps much above the unavoidable commonplace of all condolences, and are not free from the artificial rhetoric which he and his hearers loved. Yet there are fine touches here and there.

“ I call those fortunate whose death, like theirs, or whose sorrow, like yours, has the fullest portion of honour, and whose end comes at the moment they are happiest. Yet I feel how hard it is to persuade you

of this, when in the triumphs of their comrades—triumphs in which you once used to rejoice—you will so often be reminded of those you have lost: and sorrow is felt not for the blessings we have never tasted, but for those to which we have been accustomed and of which we are deprived. . . .

“And for you, their children or their brothers who are here present, I see an arduous struggle before you. For all are wont to praise those who are no more, and hardly, even though your own deserts be extraordinary, will you be held to have equalled or approached theirs. There is ever a jealousy of the living, as rivals; it is only those who stand no longer in our path that we honour with an ungrudging affection.”—(II. 44, 45.)

So, with the premise that the orphans of those who had fallen should be regarded as the children of the state, to be educated and maintained at the public cost, Pericles dismisses the assembly. The winter had now set in, and this public funeral marks the close of the first year of the war.

CHAPTER V.

THE PLAGUE AT ATHENS.

THE second summer of the war began miserably for Athens. The Peloponnesians in full force invaded the country a second time on the west and north, and for forty days cut, burned, and destroyed far more extensively and completely than in their former raid. They had lost all fear of interruption from the Athenian forces, who kept within their walls as formerly, in accordance with the policy of Pericles. But before they had been many days in the country, a far more terrible enemy had made its appearance there, which was likely to spare neither of the parties in the contest, and whose presence, as soon as it was fully recognised, made the invaders hastily withdraw.

A pestilence broke out in the overcrowded streets and suburbs of Athens. Whatever it was—and its exact identification seems impossible—it was said to have begun in Ethiopia, and after passing through Libya, and thence through a great part of the Persian empire, to have crossed the Archipelago, visiting especially the island of Lemnos, and so to have been conveyed, by the usual channel of some merchant

trader, to the harbour of Piræus, which was the quarter where it first broke out within the Athenian walls. At once there arose the cry—to be repeated so often in subsequent history—that the enemy had “poisoned the wells.” That in a city crowded beyond all sanitary rules, the wells, or rather tanks, were “poisoned” is highly probable—but hardly by the Peloponnesians. From the description given here by Thucydides, the disease appears to have been a virulent eruptive fever—of what precise type it is impossible to say.* The historian was himself attacked by it, and had also, he tells us, watched the cases of other sufferers. The careful details which he has set down of the symptoms and general course of the disease are considered, by competent medical authorities, remarkable for their clearness and intelligence, when we take into account not only the very imperfect state of medical science, but the fact that the writer cannot be supposed to have had any technical knowledge in such matters. Remarkable, too, is the calm practical foresight which led him to note the particulars, in order that, as he says, by reference to them it might be possible to recognise the disease in case of its recurrence.

“That year, as was generally remarked, was particularly free from cases of ordinary sickness; and if any

* M. Littré, in his *Introduction to the works of Hippocrates* (tome i. p. 122), pronounces it to have been “an eruptive fever, differing from smallpox, and now extinct.”—See Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, iv. 278, note.

one had been suffering from a previous attack of any kind, all such cases terminated in this. But in general persons were attacked by it suddenly, while in full health, without ostensible cause. First they were seized with violent flushings about the head, and redness and turgescence of the eyes; within, the fauces and the tongue became all at once blood-red, and the breath unnatural and fetid. After this came on sneezing and hoarseness; and in a short time the suffering extended down into the chest, with violent cough; and when it settled on the heart, it disturbed its action, and produced bilious discharges of all kinds known to medical language, accompanied by great distress.* In most cases a dry hiccup came on, causing violent spasms, which sometimes ceased soon, and in other cases lasted a long time. The surface of the body was neither very hot to the touch nor pallid, but rather red, livid, and covered with an eruption of small blisters and sores; while the internal heat was so great, that the patients could not bear upon them the thinnest garment or the finest linen, or to lie any other way than naked, and had a longing to throw themselves into cold water. Nay, many who were not carefully watched actually did so, into the tanks, urged by an insatiable thirst; and it made no difference what they drank, much or little. They suffered severely from a distressing restlessness and want of sleep through-

* It is difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of the *quasi* medical words used in this passage by Thucydides; far more difficult than it would be in a medical writer, such as Hippocrates.

out. Yet during the whole time the disease was at its height, the body was not sensibly emaciated, but held out against all this suffering in a way beyond belief; so that most died about the seventh or ninth day, of inward fever, still retaining considerable strength. Or, if they survived this crisis, when the disease passed into the abdomen, severe ulceration supervening, with profuse diarrhoea, the majority died of this last, from sheer exhaustion. For the disease, which had its first seat in the head, passed down gradually through the whole body; and if any one got through the worst stages, it was apt to leave its marks upon him by seizing the extremities, for it lighted on the fingers and toes; and many only escaped with the loss of these, and, in some few cases, of their eyes as well. Some, when they rose from their sick bed, had lost all at once their recollection of everything, and did not even know who they were, or recognise their nearest friends.

* For the character of this disease was terrible beyond description: and it attacked its victims in a way which human nature could not endure. And one point in which it showed itself distinct from all known maladies was this—that the birds and beasts which commonly prey on human bodies, either refused to touch the many dead who lay unburied, or, if they tasted them, died. As a proof of this, there was a remarkable disappearance of such birds of prey, and they were not seen either about these places or anywhere else: but the dogs, owing to their domestica-

tion, afforded a better opportunity of noting the result in such cases.*

“Some of the sufferers died untended, and some after receiving all care and medical treatment. And there was no one approved mode of treatment, so to speak, which could be had recourse to in the hope of benefit; for what did good in one case did harm in another. Nor was a good constitution any proof of strength to resist it, or of weakness; but it seized all alike, even such as were under dietetic treatment previously. And the most terrible feature of all in this disease was the despondency when any one felt himself sickening (for they betook themselves to despair at once, and gave up morally even more than physically, and so offered no resistance), and the way in which they imbibed infection from attending each other, and died like sheep. And this it was that caused the greatest mortality. For if out of fear they were unwilling to come near one another, then the sufferers died from being left untended; and many households were swept entirely away, from lack of any to nurse them. Or, if any did go near the sick, they

* Livy (lxi. 21) makes the same remark as to these natural scavengers, in his notice of the pestilence in Italy, *s.c.* 174. In England, in 1348, the “Black Death” was accompanied by a murrain among the cattle, and it was remarked that the birds of prey would not touch the carcases. (The cattle of the Athenians, it may be remembered, had mostly been carried over to the islands, and therefore probably escaped.)

lost their lives, and especially those who had a character for goodness; for they, for honour's sake, would not spare themselves, but went in and out among their friends, whereas even the very members of the family grew tired of mourning over the dying, so utterly beaten were they by the overwhelming misery. However, those who had recovered showed more compassion for the sick and dying, because they knew what it was, and stood in no fear now for themselves; for it never attacked the same person twice, at least so as to be fatal. And such persons were thought very fortunate by their neighbours, and felt a kind of hope themselves, in the joy of their present escape, of immunity for the future, and that they should never now fall victims to any other disease."—(II. 49-51.)

There was a great physician living at this time, quite within reach of Athens, who must have heard of this terrible epidemic, and it seems hardly possible but that some cases must have come under his hands. Hippocrates of Cos was probably then resident either in the island of Thasos, or at Abdera in Thrace; but though he has left us a body of cases, and though he speaks of a "malignant year," which may or may not (for he gives no date) be the year in which this pestilence was prevalent, he has not put on record any case which can be safely referred to this terrible epidemic. It has been thought possible that Thucydides, in his exile, may have seen and conversed with the great physician, and submitted to his correction his notes on

the disease, which would account for their almost technical minuteness.

The fatal character of the pestilence was aggravated, as the historian observes, by the crowded state of the city, which rendered impossible the observance of even such imperfect sanitary regulations as we may conceive then existing in Athens. His picture of the sight which the plague-stricken city presented is given in few but emphatic words:—

“Living as they did in close stifling cabins in the hot time of the year, the mortality raged among them in horrible fashion. The bodies lay dying one upon another, rolling in agony in the public streets and round all the fountains, in their eagerness after water. Even the sacred precincts, in which some had pitched tents, were full of the dead bodies of those who had expired there; for in their overwhelming misery, not knowing what would become of them, men grew careless of all distinctions sacred or profane”—(II. 52.)

He goes on to speak of the disregard of all the decent rites of burial, to which a Greek mind attached perhaps even more value than we do ourselves. He tells us how corpses were thrown by the bearers upon funeral piles which had already been lighted for another family; and how even sometimes a pile was surreptitiously set fire to and made to do its office for a stranger, before its proper corpse could be carried out for burial. But more striking than all is the description which he gives of the utter depravation of

morals, and "recklessness of living," which followed upon these daily spectacles of sudden and horrible death. It was the complete carrying out into practice of the heathen motto, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

"Deeds which men did before in secret, not daring to give full rein to their lusts, they now did with all freedom, as seeing the sudden change which came in a moment between the rich who died suddenly, and the poor who came into their wealth instead. So they determined upon swift enjoyment and instant gratification, holding life and riches alike things of a day. As for wearying themselves in the pursuit of what was honourable, it was what no man cared to do, for he held it uncertain whether he might not be carried off before he attained it; but whatever was pleasant for the moment, and whatever led to that by any means, this stood for honourable and expedient. Fear of the gods, or respect for man, there was none to restrain them: in the one case, because they judged it to be all the same whether they gave them worship or not, from seeing that all perished alike; and in the case of crimes against man, none expected that they should live to be brought to trial and suffer the penalty for them; but that a far heavier sentence had already been passed upon them, and was hanging over their heads, and that it was but fair they should have some enjoyment of life before it fell."—(II. 53.)

A similar result, with regard to public morality, is

said to have accompanied the great plague at Florence in 1348. Boccaccio says, in his account of it, that "when the evil had become universal, the hearts of all the inhabitants were closed to feelings of humanity;" and that, "amid the general lamentation and woe, the influence and authority of every law human and divine vanished." * The same was the case to some extent during the prevalence of the "Black Death" in England, in the same year.

The oracle of Apollo, it may be remembered, had promised the Peloponnesians, at the beginning of the war, that the god himself would help them, "invited or uninvited." It was to the influence of the Sun-god that the Greeks, not altogether without reason, attributed visitations of pestilence. He was the sender of such diseases, as he was also emphatically the "Healer." The Peloponnesians might well have recognised his aid when they heard of the terrible sufferings of their enemies; and it is somewhat remarkable that their own army, considering its immediate proximity, seems wholly to have escaped. The Athenians on their part bethought themselves of a half-forgotten oracular verse which warned them of a Dorian war to come, "and with it a pestilence." There was considerable doubt as to this latter word; for while some insisted that it was pestilence (*loiimos*), others said it was famine (*limos*) which had been predicted. The ambiguity was natural enough, for the pronunciation of the two words in the Greek was exactly the same — *límos*. The comment of the historian himself is curiously modern in

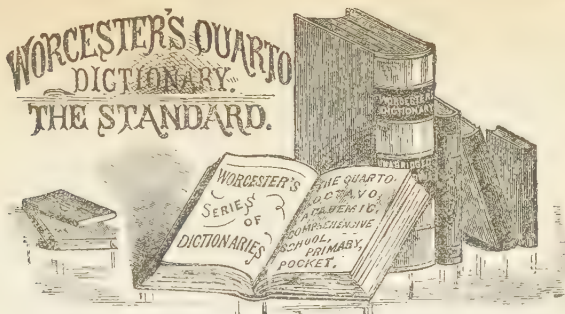
* Hecker, *Epidem. of Middle Ages*, p. 47.

its scepticism. Naturally, he says, that reading of the oracle was universally adopted which fitted in best with present circumstances; people's memory is apt to adapt itself to notorious facts. "I suppose, however," he goes on to say, "if another Dorian war were to come after this, and a *famine* happened to accompany it, in all probability the verse would be made to run accordingly."

It had been part of the deliberate policy of Pericles to allow the invaders to work their will upon the fields of Attica; but he was taking energetic measures to carry on the war against them where Athens had always the advantage—by sea. While the enemy's troops were still quartered in Athenian territory, he was sweeping the southern coast of the Peloponnese with a fleet of a hundred and fifty sail: landing here and there, and employing his heavy infantry, and even a body of cavalry (which we read of now for the first time as being conveyed over sea in horse transports), against the maritime towns, with considerable success. Another effort was made also against Potidaea, which was still holding out. But the plague accompanied the reinforcements which were sent to Thrace, and Hagnon, who commanded them, after losing in one month one fourth of his 4000 men, had to put to sea again to save the remainder.

In this season of distress, the commons of Athens turned upon the man whom they regarded as the author of it all—Pericles, who had advocated the war, and promised them certain victory. They accused him, openly and secretly, of being the ruin of his country,

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(OVER.)

and clamoured loudly for peace at any price with Sparta. The great statesman was neither surprised nor alarmed at the turn of popular opinion. It was the very thing he had expected, says the historian. By virtue of his office of general, which he still held, he summoned a public Assembly. He told them plainly that nothing of the kind surprised him : it was the way of the world ; but surely, unworthy of Athenians. For himself, he scorned to qualify his original advice, or admit that he had been mistaken

“I am the same that I was then, and I am not going to retreat from my position : it is you who are changed ; for the fact is, you were ready to follow my advice when danger had not touched you, and you repent now that you have begun to suffer ; and my counsel seems to you to be wrong, owing to your own weakness of resolution : because the suffering comes home to each man’s feelings at once, while the advantages do not as yet make themselves clear to any. Because a great reverse, and that on the sudden, has befallen you, you are too utterly dispirited to persevere in the course you chose. Yes—the sudden and the unexpected, and what befalls us contrary to all reasonable calculation, *has* a tendency to enslave the spirit ; and this is your case, especially as regards this pestilence, coming as it has in addition to our other misfortunes. Still, citizens as you are of a great city, and brought up in principles corresponding to this greatness, it were your duty to stand up cheerfully against great reverses too, and never tarnish your high name. For the world

claims the same right to censure those who from lack of spirit fail to maintain the reputation they have won, as to hate those who impudently grasp at that to which they have no claim. Your duty is to check your grief for your private sufferings, and hold fast to the maintenance of the public weal."

There are passages in this speech which would seem to show that even Pericles had sometimes before him that vision of a widespread empire which had already begun to dazzle some of the leading minds at Athens.

"You look upon your empire as extending only over your subject allies: I can show you that of the two realms open to men's use—land and sea—you are already wholly masters of the one as far as you reach now, and as much further as you may choose to reach. With the force you have, there is no king nor any nation existing at this present who can hinder you from sailing whither you will. So that this power is not to be put in comparison with your property in lands and houses, which you think it so much to lose. It is not reasonable that you should take the loss of these things so hardly: you should regard them rather with indifference, as the mere appenages and embellishments of a wealthy estate, when weighed against that power I speak of. Be sure that if we only cling to and maintain our freedom, that will easily recover for us all the rest; whilst if once we bow to the power of others, all we possess will be likely to crumble away. Show that you have not degenerated in two great

points from your fathers: through toil and danger they acquired this dominion — they did not receive it as an inheritance from others; moreover, they maintained it and handed it down to you: and it were baser to let what we have be taken from us, than to have been unsuccessful in its acquisition.

“Do not suppose that you are fighting on this single question—whether it shall be vassalage or independence; it is also whether you will be stripped of your empire, and so incur all the danger arising from the hatred your rule has provoked. And you cannot give it up now—if any man under present circumstances, because he is afraid, should propose to play the magnanimous by so doing, and would have us as a nation retire into private life. This power you hold has already become a despotism, which, however it may have been unrighteous to usurp, it is very dangerous to lay down. Such counsellors would very soon ruin a state if they could persuade their fellow-citizens, or if they were to occupy an independent colony anywhere by themselves; for the peacemonger is only safe so long as he has a fighting friend to stand by him; and it cannot be good policy for a sovereign state, whatever it may be for a subject one, to seek its safety in loss of independence.”—(II. 61-63.)

The effect of this speech upon the Athenians was that, so far as any change in their public policy went, they followed the advice of Pericles, and gave up the project of making terms with Sparta. But so bitterly did they

feel the pressure of the war upon them as individuals, so personally angry were they with him as its author, that they called upon him to furnish a statement of his expenditure of the public treasure, and on some pretence of malversation, fined him a sum of money. "and not long after," says our historian, "chose him general again, and put everything into his hands." They had made trial, it would seem, of some weaker instruments meanwhile, and found them wanting.

And here—restored to his old supremacy—the great Athenian disappears from the pages of our historian. He lived about a year longer: just long enough to see the termination of the long blockade of Potidaea, which capitulated to the Athenians on terms that the sovereign people thought far too easy,—the garrison and inhabitants being allowed to evacuate the place with something like the honours of war. But the death of Pericles is only briefly mentioned by the way. Thucydides is emphatically the historian of the war, and he seldom turns aside to dwell upon the personal history or characters of even the most illustrious of those who took part in it. In the case of Pericles, however, his earnest admiration of the man finds expression even in the brief record which, with exceptional favour, he pauses here for a moment to give of his services to the state:—

"So long as he stood at the head of state in time of peace, he governed with moderation and maintained it in safety, and under him it rose to its highest power. And when the war broke out, he proved that he had

well calculated the state's resources. He lived through two years and a half of it; and when he died, his foresight as to its conduct became even more generally admitted. For he always said that if they kept quiet, and paid due attention to their navy, and did not grasp at extension of empire during the war, or expose their city to danger, they would be the victors. But they did the very contrary to all this; and in matters which seemed to have no reference to the war, they followed an evil policy as to their own interests and those of their allies, in accordance with their private jealousies and private advantage; measures which, when successful, brought honour and profit to individuals only, while if they failed, the disadvantage was felt by the state in its results on the war. The reason lay in this; that Pericles, powerful by his influence and ability, and manifestly incorruptible by bribes, exercised a control over the masses combined with excellent tact, and rather led them than allowed them to lead him. For since he did not gain his ascendancy by unbecoming means, he never used language to humour them, but was able, on the strength of his high character, even to oppose their passions. That is, when he saw them overweeningly confident without just grounds, he would speak so as to inspire them with a wholesome fear; or when they were unreasonably alarmed, he would raise their spirits again to confidence. It was a nominal democracy, but in fact the government of the one foremost man."—(II. 65.)

All the authorities which we have for the history

of the times fully bear out this estimate of the position of Pericles in the Athenian state. For the private sorrows which marked the close of his life, and which may have helped to shorten it, we have to turn to the —not always veracious—pages of Plutarch. He had lost by the prevailing epidemic two sons, a sister, and many of his dearest political friends. He died of some lingering malady; Plutarch says it was one form of the same disease. True patriot to the end, when the friends who stood round his deathbed were speaking of his glorious career, he checked them by remarking that none had yet named what he held to be his chief glory—"that no fellow-citizen had ever had cause to put on mourning through him."

The plague continued its ravages in Athens for two whole years, and then, after an interval of twelve months, broke out again B.C. 427, and lasted another year. It carried off altogether 4400 of the heavy infantry, 300 cavalry (all of whom would be citizens of some position), and of the lower classes "a number never ascertained;" of women and children the historian seems to take no account. The total loss of life probably exceeded the number of those slain in battle during the whole war.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SIEGE OF PLATÆA.

THE confederate Peloponnesians now sought aid from a quarter any appeal to which, we might have thought, would have been held treason to Greece, did we not know that Athens had done the same early in the war. They sent an embassy to the king of Persia, to ask for a subsidy and for troops. Their envoys took Thrace in their way, endeavouring to detach Sitalees, king of a large part of Thrace, from the interests of Athens, and to induce him to make an attack on their colony of Potidæa. The negotiation was more than unsuccessful; for the son of Sitalees, who had received the freedom of Athens, put the visitors into the hands of the Athenians. They were carried at once to Athens, and there put to death without a hearing - in retaliation, the Athenians said, for similar cruel treatment of their own merchant-sailors and others who had been captured by the enemy on their coasts. But the barbarities which marked this war in general were so great on both sides, that Thucydides might have spared here, as he commonly does, any apology or explanation.

In the chronicle of this year we get one of the few

notices which occur in our author's pages of Athenian commerce; and here only because it falls into the history of the war. They sent a squadron of six ships to watch the coast of Lycia and Caria, both for the purpose of getting subsidies of money from the sea-coast towns, and also to hinder the enemy's privateers (Thucydides roundly calls them "pirates," but we must remember that even up to this date piracy had scarcely lost its credit as a profession for "gentlemen adventurers") "from making these harbours their rendezvous for attacking the merchant vessels on their voyage from Phasêlis and Phœnicia."

The first movement in the third campaign was made by the Peloponnesians, not by a raid as before into the Athenian borders, but by an expedition in full force, under the Spartan king Archidamus, against the independent town of Plataea, which enjoyed the intimate alliance and protection of Athens. The Thebans had not forgotten their ill fated attempt upon the city two years before, and the massacre of the prisoners: and they were no doubt clamorous among the allies for revenge. When the invaders had pitched their camp and sent out their plundering parties, the Plataeans earnestly remonstrated. They reminded the Spartan king that the independence of their little state had been guaranteed to them for ever by his own countryman Pausanias, in gratitude for that memorable victory gained within sight of their walls, when he with their help had liberated Greece from the Medes; and they adjured him not to violate so solemn an engagement. There is some sophistry in the Spartan's answer:—

“Ye speak fair enough, men of Plataea, if ye do but act as ye speak. Enjoy your independence yourselves, even as Pausanias gave it, and assist us in giving independence to your neighbours,—to all who shared the danger then and swore the same oaths, and are now under the power of the Athenians. It is to free them and others from this yoke, that this warlike array has been set on foot. So take your part in it,—so will you best abide by your sworn faith. Or if you cannot do this, then remain quiet, as we at first invited you, occupy your own borders, and take part with neither side, admitting both as friends, but for military operations neither. And this will content us.”—(II. 72.)

The Plataeans held a public council before they gave their answer. They could do nothing, they said, without consulting Athens, for there they had bestowed their wives and children; nor, even should they adopt the neutral policy proposed, could they depend on the Thebans respecting it. Archidamus made them another proposal: let them migrate from Plataea, and give up their lands and their property into the hands of the Lacedaemonians, who would maintain them so long as the war should last wherever they chose to fix themselves, and restore all to them when it was over. The Plataeans asked leave to refer this proposition to Athens, and there they received assurances of support, so long as they maintained their fealty. Then, speaking from their walls, as not trusting themselves in any further negotiation, they made answer to the Spartans that to accept their terms was “impossible.”

Thereupon, after an appeal to the gods to defend the right, Archidamus began the memorable siege of Plataea: the earliest of which we possess any details that can be called historical. It is described by the writer with the minutest particulars, which he must have heard from some one who took part in it. How the enemy surrounded the city with a wooden palisade made out of the fruit trees which had already been cut down: how they brought larger timber from the forests of the neighbouring Mount Cithæron, and built an inclined plane, into which earth was rammed, against a part of the town wall, in order to enter the place by storm, working at it in relays for seventy days and seventy nights: how the besieged on their part raised their wall higher from the inside at the point where the danger threatened, pulling down houses to obtain material, and protecting the face of the work with raw hides against the fire-arrows armed with lighted tow: how they undermined the mound that was rising against them, by boring into it through the bottom of their own wall and carrying away the earth inside: and how, when this device was discovered, and the mound still rose higher and higher, they began a new wall, in an inverted segment of a circle, within the old one, so that the enemy would gain nothing even when this latter was won. The Peloponnesians made a final effort, which had nearly succeeded, by throwing lighted fagots and other combustibles over into the town: but a heavy thunder-storm came at the critical moment (at least, "it is so reported") to the aid of the besieged.

Part of the army then left, and the siege became an

investment. The wooden palisade was replaced by a double wall with a covered-way between, and connecting watch-towers at intervals, and a ditch on either side: it was well understood that the blockade was likely to be a long one. Inside the place were four hundred Plateans and eighty Athenians—all fighting men: the non-combatants had been sent away long before, excepting a hundred and ten women to make bread. Our author leaves them in this position for eighteen months, in order to preserve his yearly tabulation of events; but this interrupts too much the reader's interest in his story.

The close investment did its work effectually; and the troops within the walls, few as they were, began to suffer from the want of provisions, and saw little hope of aid from without. They determined on an attempt to escape. The double wall of circumvallation which their enemies had drawn round them, in order to be effectual for its purpose, had to be strictly guarded and patrolled; and the Plateans had found out that in the wet and cold nights the patrols were in the habit of retiring under cover of the towers. Their plans were formed accordingly: scaling-ladders were prepared, and they watched an opportunity to make an attempt to pass over the double fortification under cover of a stormy night. Half of them lost their taste afterwards for so desperate an attempt; two hundred and twenty persevered in their resolution, and succeeded. It is one of the historian's most graphic narratives, well-known in substance, but scarcely better told than in his own words:—

“When all was ready, they waited for a stormy night with wind and rain, and when there was no moon, and so set out, the contrivers of the attempt leading the way. And first they crossed the ditch which girdled them on their own side, and got to the enemy’s wall, without attracting the notice of the watch, since these could not see far through the darkness, and did not hear the sound of their approach because the noise of the wind drowned it. They moved, too at careful distance from each other, that their arms might not clash together and so make their movements heard. They were in very light marching order, with the left foot only shod, so as to give them safe footing in the mud. So they made for the battlements in the mid-space between two of the towers, satisfied that they should find these deserted. First came those who bore the ladders, and planted them; then twelve of the light company mounted, armed with dagger and breastplate only, led by Ammias son of Coræbus, who was the first to mount; after him the rest followed and reached the top, making for each of the towers. Other light armed soldiers followed, with nothing but short spears, their shields, in order that they might mount the quicker, being carried by others behind them, who were to pass them to their owners when they engaged the enemy. When a good many had got up, the guard from within the towers heard them; for one of the Plataeans, in laying hold of the battlement, displaced a tile from it, which rattled as it fell. At once the alarm was shouted, and the enemy rushed from their lines to the walls; for they did not

know what the alarm meant, in the dark night and in the storm. At the same moment the Plateans who had been left in the town sallied out, and attacked the enemy's line of circumvallation on the side opposite to that where their comrades were climbing over, to divert attention as much as possible from them. The enemy were bewildered, therefore, and remained at their several quarters ; and no man ventured to leave his own station to support the others, but all were at a loss to make out what was going on. Even the three hundred who had been told off to give support at any point where it was required, went outside their works to the quarter whence the shouts proceeded. Fire-signals of alarm were made to Thebes ; but the Plateans lighted several beacons on their walls which had been prepared for the purpose, so that the signals might be unintelligible to the enemy, and they might not march to the aid of their friends, but might fancy the state of affairs to be anything but what it really was, until the fugitives shall have got clear away and reached a place of safety.

“ Meanwhile, as to the Plateans who were scaling the wall, as soon as the foremost of them had got up and made themselves masters of both the towers, and slain the guard, they posted themselves at the thoroughfare at each of the towers, so as to let no one pass through to the rescue. They then planted ladders from the wall against the towers, and so sent up a good many of their men. Those on the towers and under them kept off any that were coming to the rescue ; while the main body, having planted addi-

tional ladders, and also pulled down some of the battlements, were climbing over the works in the space between the towers. Each man, as he got over, took his place on the edge of the ditch, and from that position they kept off with arrows and javelins any who might come along the side of the wall to hinder the crossing. When all had crossed over, then the men from the towers—the hindmost not without difficulty—descended and got on the ditch. Meanwhile the guard of three hundred were coming up with torches. Now the Plataeans, standing in the shadow on the edge of the ditch, got a good sight of them, and launched their arrows and javelins against them as they stood exposed; while, keeping in the dark as they did themselves, they were all the less visible for the torch light, so that even the last of their party succeeded in passing the ditch; not, however, without much toil and difficulty, for there was ice formed on it, not strong enough to bear, but somewhat slushy, as is commonly the case with an easterly wind; and as there was snow falling that night with this wind, it produced a great deal of water in the ditch, which they had to cross up to their necks. Still, it was in great measure owing to the violence of the storm that they succeeded in escaping.”—(III. 23.)

The attempt was carried out with the same combination of daring and forethought to the end. The fugitives made straight for Thebes, “thinking that the Peloponnesians would never dream of their taking that road into an enemy’s country;” and it must have been

with a grim satisfaction that they "saw their pursuers moving with torches along the road to Athens," which they naturally were supposed to have taken, and which place they did reach eventually by striking off into the mountains. Two hundred and twelve got clear away, out of two hundred and twenty who had left the town. Some few had lost heart at the outset, and turned back ; one had been taken prisoner ; but not a single life appears to have been lost in the gallant adventure. Those whose courage had failed them told their comrades in the town that all the rest of the party had been slain ; and it was not until the garrison sent into the enemy's lines next morning for the usual permission to "bury their dead," that they learned they had no dead to bury.

The investment was continued, and still the defenders held out ; but though the gallant exploit which has been related had left fewer mouths to be fed, the stock of provisions within the walls was at last exhausted. The escape of the two hundred had also weakened the little garrison : and the commander of the Lacedæmonian forces was well aware that he could take the place any day by storm. He would not do so, for a curious strategic reason. It was usual, in Greek negotiations at the close of a war, to agree to restore all conquests on both sides, but not such places as had come over by voluntary capitulation : and the Lacedæmonians hoped by this means to retain the town of Platæa as a permanent acquisition.

Driven thus to extremities, at the end of two years of close blockade, the few remaining defenders at last

surrendered at discretion. That is, they agreed to leave the decision of their fate to judges sent from Lacedæmon, who should "punish the guilty, but no one contrary to justice." What the Lacedæmonian ideas of justice were they soon learnt by terrible experience. Five special commissioners arrived from Lacedæmon. No charge was brought forward against the garrison : they were simply asked, "Had they, during the present war, done any service in any way to the Lacedæmonians or their allies?" There could be only one answer : the question meant a judicial murder : and the prisoners asked leave to defend themselves. One of the earliest critics of Thucydides—Dionysius of Halicarnassus—reckons this defence as one of the finest specimens of his oratory.

They feared—they said—that their fate was determined already : they were to be sacrificed to the vengeance of Thebes. Yet they would remind the allies of their good service done to Greece in old times, when Thebes had betrayed it. If they found themselves now ranged on the side of Athens, it was because Lacedæmon had rejected their application for aid when hard pressed by their enemies the Thebans : and it was the Thebans who had now attacked them first, and that in a time of peace. It would be a monstrous thing to blot from the community of Greece a town whose name had been inscribed, by the national gratitude, on the votive tripod at Delphi. Such a deed would be a stain on the character of Lacedæmon for ever. There is much pathos in their concluding words :—

“But we must bring this pleading to a close—hard as that is, when we feel our lives are in peril of closing with it. We have done : only protesting, that it was not to the Thebans we surrendered our city—rather than that, we would have preferred to die by famine, most wretched as it is of all deaths ; it was to you we trusted, when we gave in. It were but fair, then, if we fail to persuade you, to put us back in the position in which we were, and let us take our choice of the fate that may await us. We adjure you not to let us Plateans, once so zealous in the defence of Greece, now suppliants here before you, Lacedæmonians, be delivered up out of your hands and your pledged honour to our bitterest enemies, the Thebans : nay, be our preservers rather, and do not, while giving freedom to the other Greeks, leave us to destruction.”—(III. 59.)

The Thebans feared the effect of this appeal. They replied—or Thucydides replies—at considerable length. How far these speeches, as we have them, represent what was actually said, can be only matter of conjecture. Mitford holds, with good reason, that they are “not likely to have been very exactly reported ;” Grote places “full confidence in them, so far as the substance goes.” The form and arrangement of both the defence and the rejoinder show that the historian would himself have made an admirable pleader.

The Plateans had claimed credit, said their accusers, for not “Medising” at the time of the great war : but they would have joined the Medes if the

Athenians had. And they (the Thebans) had not "Medised" as a state—it was the act only of a small despotic faction. They had shown their regard for the liberties of Greece by their steadfast opposition to the encroachments of Athens—as dangerous an enemy to liberty as ever the Persian was. The real traitors to Greece were those who, like the Plataeans, followed willingly the lead of Athens in all her ambitious designs, instead of joining the general league against her, or preserving neutrality as they had been urged to do. As to the attack made on their city, of which they complained, the Thebans had come there on the invitation of some of the chief men in Plataea itself, who were desirous of joining the Boeotian confederacy: they had come in peace, to proclaim a new constitution; they had been received as enemies, and their men, in violation of a solemn promise, treacherously massacred. For this they now demanded vengeance—"in order that men might learn in future not to seek fair excuses for evil deeds."

The Lacedæmonian commission decided that the men of Plataea, having rejected the position of neutrals which had been repeatedly and formally offered them, had placed themselves outside the laws of war—such as they were. They put to each man singly the hopeless question, "Had he done any service to them or to their allies?" And as each made the only answer that was possible, he was led away to death. Two hundred Plataeans and twenty-five Athenians who formed part of the garrison were thus killed in cold blood. The Athenians, in whose cause they died,

seem to have made no effort to save them, nor to have entered any special protest against the deed. Thucydides narrates the bare fact here, as he does the slaughter of the citizens of Mitylenè, in a few words, without an expression of censure in either case. It seems quite possible that public opinion, among the Greeks of those days, saw in such treatment of their prisoners of war nothing to call for exceptional reprobation. The women who had remained within the walls were sold as slaves, the town itself razed to the ground, and the name of Plataea was for the present, as its citizens had so pathetically foreboded, "blotted out of the national family of Greeks."* It was all done, says Thucydides, to gratify the unrelenting enmity of the Thebans, whose support in this war was felt to be of the utmost importance by their Peloponnesian allies.

* It was restored and garrisoned by the Spartans forty years afterwards, as a blow to the pride of Thebes, with which state they were then at war; was again destroyed utterly by the Thebans, and restored again by Alexander.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FATE OF MITYLENE.

IN the same year in which the siege of Plataea was begun (B.C. 429) the Athenians met with a serious reverse in an expedition against the revolted Chalcidians in Thrace, in which they lost above 400 of their best men and all their generals. It was far more than compensated by the two brilliant victories won for them in the Corinthian gulf by Phormio (unquestionably the ablest of all their admirals in this war) over the confederate fleet—chiefly made up from Corinth and Sicily. This was the first serious trial of naval strength between the two parties since the affair off Coreyra. In the first of the two sea fights the confederates (who had forty-five ships against twenty) adopted a singular formation to await the attack of the Athenians. They formed their ships into a circle, with their prows outwards and their sterns in, as wide as they could without giving the enemy room to sail through. Inside they stationed all the small craft which accompanied the expedition, and also five of their fastest war-galleys, which were to move out at once and give support at any point where the enemy

might attack. Neither this ingenious plan, nor their great superiority in numbers, saved them from an utter defeat. In fact, in the position they had taken up, their numbers did but hamper them in a rough sea. Phormio, with his faster galleys and better-trained crews, kept moving round the outside of their circle, "knowing that he could choose his own moment for attack," and waiting for the increased breeze which generally came with the dawn. It came, and the confederate ships were unable to keep their distances: the circle grew narrower and narrower, and their vessels fouled each other. Then Phormio saw his opportunity, and won an easy victory. Thereupon the confederate admirals were practically superseded by having "counsellors" (like the French republican "commissioners") sent to them from Sparta. But, in spite of commissioners and strong reinforcements, the result of a second engagement, under even a greater disparity of strength than before, was equally disastrous. It was in vain that the Spartan commissioners made an earnest harangue to the fleet,—introducing a point which, as Grote has well observed, "was rarely touched upon by generals on the eve of battle," and which showed a consciousness that their men had but little heart to fight the Athenians again. "We shall make at least as good dispositions for battle as your late commanders, and we will give no man an excuse for being a coward: if any choose so to be, he shall be punished as he deserves." The vicissitudes of this second engagement were remarkable, and are told in the historian's most lucid style. Phormio had still but his

twenty galleys, while the enemy had now collected seventy-five. It was therefore his object to avoid a battle—especially where he had not much sea-room—until his own reinforcements could come up. The manoeuvres continued for six days. Then the confederates made a feint against Naupactus, an Athenian settlement within the gulf, which was quite undefended. This drew Phormio into the narrower water, in his anxiety to protect the town: and then the Peloponnesians suddenly changed their course, cut off nine of his ships, and drove them ashore.

“Meanwhile their own twenty ships of the right wing [these were the fastest sailers] went in chase of the eleven Athenian galleys which had made their escape, when the sudden change of course took place, into the wider channel. But all except one succeeded in making Naupactus before they were overtaken, and ranged themselves in line, with their prows outwards, off the temple of Apollo, prepared for action in case the enemy should follow them under the land. They came up presently, and were singing the paean as they sailed, considering that they had won a victory, and the one Athenian galley that lagged behind the others was being chased by a Leucadian, which was far ahead of her consorts. Now there chanced to be a merchant vessel riding at anchor in deep water, round which the Athenian, being sufficiently in advance, made a sharp turn, struck the Leucadian that was chasing her amidships, and so sank her. There fell a panic on the Peloponnesians at this sudden and un-

looked-for exploit ; so much so, that running in chase as they were without much order, in all the confidence of victory, some of their galleys even stopped rowing and did not continue their course, waiting for the main squadron—the worst thing they could have done, with the enemy at such close quarters—and some, from want of knowing the coast, got into shoal-water. When the Athenians saw all this, their courage rose, and with one unanimous shout they raised their battle-cry and made at them. What with their unlucky mistakes, and the confusion they had now got into, the enemy stood their ground but a very little while, and then turned and made for Panormus, whence they had started. The Athenians followed in chase, took six of the nearest galleys, and recovered their own which the enemy had driven ashore at the beginning of the battle, and taken in tow. Of the men, they killed some, and some few they made prisoners. Now on board the Leucadian galley, which was sunk by the turn round the merchantman, was Timocrates the Lacedæmonian : when the ship was sinking, he stabbed himself, and his body was washed ashore in the harbour at Naupactus.”—(II. 91, 92.)

The confederate admirals now sought to retrieve their defeat by a bold stroke in another direction. So confident were the Athenians, according to their historian, of their superiority at sea, that their port and arsenal at Piræus had been left wholly unprotected. It was resolved to make a sudden dash upon it. As the siege of Plataea had been undertaken to

gratify the Thebans, so this stab at the very heart of Athens was suggested by the bitterest of her enemies and the greatest sufferer in her home market by the Athenian blockading ships. It was from Megara the suggestion came. The crews from the allied fleet marched overland to Nisæa, the Megarian port, manned forty vessels which lay there, and set sail—but not direct for Athens: they stopped to sack the island of Salamis by the way. They said it was an unfavourable wind that delayed them: but they might have sailed into the harbour of Athens easily enough—"if they had had the spirit not to hesitate, and the wind would not have hindered it"—is the contemptuous criticism of the military historian. As it was, the fire-signals from Salamis gave warning to Athens of the danger; at dawn the home fleet moved out to meet the enemy at Salamis, while the land troops mounted guard at the harbour.

The confederates contented themselves with their plunder, and returned in all haste to Nisæa, whence they had started. "Their galleys also caused them some uneasiness, as they had been lying high and dry for some time, and were anything but water-tight." So little did their admirals seem to have known of the very essentials of naval warfare. The Athenians took the warning, and secured their harbour by a boom, or something of the kind, and took other precautions for its future defence.

Towards the winter of the year, Sitalees of Thrace made an important expedition against Perdiccas of Macedonia, partly as a diversion in favour of his

allies the Athenians. He led with him an enormous force, swelled on the march, by the contingents of the various tribes who more or less acknowledged his sovereignty, till it reached 150,000 men. An Athenian naval squadron was to have co-operated on the coast: but, as is the case so often with combined operations, the dispositions failed. The expedition was undertaken so late in the year, that the Athenians—not believing, says Thucydides, that their allies would undertake it at all—never despatched a fleet, but only envoys and complimentary presents. The Thracian king entered into negotiations with the Macedonian, and the invading host returned as it came, after thirty days of ravaging and plunder.

Phormio and his victorious fleet returned to Athens at the close of the winter with the captured ships and prisoners. The freemen among them, we are told, were exchanged by regular cartel with the enemy. The slaves would be reckoned with the other materials of war, and their condition would not be much affected, whether they worked for Athens or Sparta.

The following campaign began as usual. “As soon as the corn was ripe,” Archidamus and his allies made their third inroad on the fields of Attica. The Athenian cavalry kept them somewhat in check, and prevented them from carrying their destruction into the immediate neighbourhood of the city.

This year was marked by the revolt from Athenian rule of the important island of Lesbos (B.C. 428). Its powerful capital, Mitylenè, had long been impatient of a dependent position, and had contemplated

such a movement even before the war, but was waiting to be better prepared. Events were somewhat hastened in consequence of the Athenians receiving warning of the design from Methymna, the one town in the island which remained faithful to its allegiance. At first they were loath to believe in such an alarming addition to their difficulties, "crippled as they were already by the war and the pestilence;" but they found the news was too true, and sent to demand of the islanders to give up their fleet and dismantle their new fortifications. They flatly refused, and even risked a battle with the Athenian fleet sent to enforce the demand. As was to be expected, their raw sailors were easily beaten; and then - anxious to save their fleet, if possible - the Mityleneans asked for terms, which the Athenian commanders were willing to grant, "having fears on their own part that they were not strong enough to carry on hostilities against all Lesbos united." The Lesbians sent delegates to Athens to negotiate; but, at the same time, having no great confidence in the result, they sent an embassy to ask help from Sparta.

Their envoys were admitted to an audience at Olympia, at the great national festival of Greece. Their spokesman is reported as defending his countrymen against any charge Athens might bring against them of a breach of faith. They were conscious that their case might have an ugly look, even in the eyes of the enemies of Athens; that "it might possibly seem somewhat base, after being treated honourably in time of peace, to revolt from her in her hour of danger." But

they professed to be alarmed at the prospect of the future. They had admitted the suzerainty of Athens, in order to defend the liberties of Greece against the Persians ; but Athens had gradually reduced all her weaker allies under as complete a despotism as the Persian. Were they to wait until, when their possible allies had all been reduced to this state, they should themselves be the last to be absorbed? The only chance for Lesbos was to anticipate their would-be tyrants, and strike a blow for liberty before their chance grew desperate. Naturally, they said, they were speaking for their own interests; but none the less was it for the interest of Sparta to embrace the opportunity, and attack her great enemy where she was most vulnerable, in and by the means of one of her most important colonies. There is no word of real complaint as to the treatment of the islanders by the sovereign state. True, it may be said that, though the defence is put into the mouth of a Mitylenean, the language is really that of Thucydides the Athenian ; but there is no reason here or elsewhere to suspect him of unfairness, and there is nothing on record to show that the bearing of Athens towards her subject-allies was not exercised for their interests as well as for her own. When the catastrophe of the revolt comes to be considered, it is well to bear all its circumstances in mind.

The arguments of the Mitylenean envoys, whatever they were worth, fell upon very willing ears. The island was received into the confederation, and the Lacedæmonians took occasion of the supposed Athenian difficulties to order an invasion of Attica by the

several contingents in strong force. But Athens made an immense effort to meet the occasion. Without moving a galley from Lesbos, they raised a levy *en masse* of all except the very highest rank of citizens, and equipped a fleet of a hundred sail to face the astonished Lacedæmonians. The latter found their allies not nearly so forward as themselves. "They were busy gathering in their harvest: they were sick of expeditions into Attica;" and so the appointed gathering at the Isthmus proved a failure, and the Lacedæmonians went home. At the same time, the Mityleneans made an unsuccessful attempt to reduce their impracticable neighbour, Methymna, which maintained a stubborn loyalty to Athens. But they were soon themselves closely invested by the Athenian admiral, Paches, who was sent there with a large force, and who drew a line of circumvallation round the town, while his fleet strictly blockaded their harbour. A Lacedæmonian envoy nevertheless succeeded in creeping in through a water-course, and bade them hold out, for that the allies would make a strong diversion in their favour by an invasion of Attica in force.

The invasion of the Athenian territory, which the Lacedæmonians had promised should soon distract the attention and the forces of their enemy from the siege of Mitylenè, took place in the spring. It was headed by the Spartan Cleomenes, now acting as regent for his nephew Pleistoanax, who was yet a minor. "They ravaged," says our author, "not only the districts which they had laid waste before, wherever anything had grown again, but all that they had left unvisited in

their former incursions: and this was the sorest raid of all for the Athenians, except the second." But nothing could force Athens to relax her grasp upon her revolted dependency; and the garrison of Mitylenè, suffering now from famine, and still seeing no aid from Sparta, made such terms as they could with Paches. They opened their gates to his army, and only bargained that he should put none of them to death or sell them for slaves, till they should have had an opportunity of pleading their cause at Athens. Thither the leading citizens, who had taken an active part in the movement for independence, were sent for public trial. Seven days too late, the Lacedæmonian fleet, so long expected, but which had been wasting the days so precious to the Mityleneans in some minor operations, arrived in the neighbourhood only to find the city in the hands of the enemy.

There was no hesitation at Athens as to the punishment of the men whom they looked upon in the light of the most ungrateful of all their dependants. The public vote was for death, not only to the citizens whom Paches had selected and sent home as most deeply implicated in the revolt, but to all Mityleneans who were able to bear arms—probably not less than six thousand—and slavery to their women and children. But this hasty popular vote was followed, as is not unfrequently the case, by something like a popular repentance; and the Mitylenean deputies and their few friends at Athens took advantage of the feeling to get the question brought forward afresh. And here Thucydides first brings into view a man who played

a leading part in the commons of Athens--who was better abused, probably, than any man of his day, figuring not merely in the pages of history, but as the never failing subject of satirical comedy--with whom the fortunes of Thucydides himself are thought to have been very closely connected, and as to whose real character historians and scholars widely differ to this day. He is introduced to us with an abruptness more common with early than with recent historians, simply by name--Cleon, son of Cleonetus--as the uncompromising supporter, from first to last, of a policy of extermination towards revolted subjects. Such character as Thucydides here gives of him is summed up in a very few words--"One of the most violent of the citizens in every way, and at that time possessing unbounded influence with the commons." He speaks of him again, in a subsequent passage, as a dishonest politician and a reckless slanderer;* but, as will be seen hereafter, there are reasons for receiving the historian's judgment in this particular case with some degree of caution. This Cleon was a man of the people in every sense--he, or at least his father, was said to have been a tanner--and he undoubtedly possessed, as would be admitted both by his enemies and his apologists, the popular gifts of a strong voice and a fluent tongue; to which might be added the no less popular qualifications of abundant self confidence, unqualified opinions, and unscrupulous dealing with opponents. Not what either Athenian or English politicians would call a "gentleman," by any means; but an able

* V. 16.

and vigorous debater, and a party chief of unquestionable power. He had already, before our historian introduces him, worked his way into public notice as an opponent of Pericles, and probably was one of the many who, without that great statesman's qualifications, aimed at succeeding to his place in Athens. He now came forward to denounce in the strongest terms the weak-minded policy which would reverse the merciless but (as he argued) just decree which had been passed against Mitylenè. How far his speech on the second discussion, which Thucydides gives at length, is real or imaginary, we cannot tell; but it may at least be received as setting forth the view taken of the case by a large party at Athens.

Very much of his harangue sounds like a succession of ironical paradoxes, from the mouth of such a speaker. We might believe that it embodied rather the opinions of Thucydides himself than those of the popular demagogue. Cleon sets forth the danger of allowing eloquent speakers to turn the Assembly from their sober judgment: he puts before them a picture of themselves which was not far from the truth, but which we should not expect to find thus drawn by the hand of a popular leader. Then he proceeds: -

“You conduct these political debates on false principles. You attend such discussions as you would a theatre, — as a mere audience, and you take your facts from hearsay; deciding on the feasibility of any enterprise from the language of some plausible orator, and for your view of past events depending not so

much on the evidence of your own eyes as on the criticisms of clever theorists: readier than any men I know to be taken in by a specious paradox, and to shrink from carrying out what you have solemnly determined; ever the slaves of the last new whim, scorners of sober use and wont. What each would like best is to be an orator himself; or, if that cannot be, then you vie, as it were, with the orators so far as not to seem to be following their lead in thought, but to anticipate any clever turn by your applause, and to be quick in catching the sense of what is suggested before the words are spoken, — as you are slow to foresee their possible consequences. You are always seeking for something grander, if I may so express it, than the facts of daily life, yet lack common sense to judge of the facts before your eyes. In short, you are taken captive by the pleasures of the ear, and you are more like an audience sitting at a disputation of rhetoricians, than men gravely consulting on affairs of state.”—(III. 38.)

It is Thucydides, surely — the grave and caustic aristocratical politician — who delivers himself of these home truths to his countrymen; not the demagogue whom he at least represents as the mob-orator, swaying their passions by violent language, and reckless of all political morality. This portion of Cleon's reputed speech reads almost like a passage from Aristophanes paraphrased into sounding prose, — where that wonderful satirist is sketching the character and habits of this very same commons of Athens, as led away and deluded by this man Cleon and others of his type. However,

after this remarkable exordium, the speaker goes on to state the case very forcibly, and with no manifest unfairness, against the unhappy Mityleneans. They had no excuse: they had no complaint to make against Athens, by their own confession; they had been living in practical independence, under their own laws, treated with all honour and consideration; if Athens had done wrong at all, it was in treating them better than her other dependencies; "for it is the common trick of human nature to despise those who pay us court, and to look up with respect to those who never stoop an inch to us." He contends that justice, as well as the interest of Athens, called for signal punishment of these wanton rebels. "By a weaker course you will fail to conciliate them, while you will condemn yourselves; for if they did right to revolt, then you had no right to rule. And if you are determined, even without such right, to maintain your dominion, you must also so far disregard right, and punish these men from expediency; or else throw up your dominion, and adopt the high moral tone when you can do so in safe obscurity."—"Punish them, then, as they deserve, and make of them an unmistakable example to your other dependencies, that the penalty for revolt, in any case, is death. If once they feel this, you will not so often have to hold your hands from your enemies in order to defend yourselves against your allies."

Cleon's speech was answered by one Diodotus—of whom we know nothing besides. Even he, while he strongly urges on his countrymen some modification of the terrible decree, does so on the ground of political

expediency,—not of mercy. “As for pity or indulgence,” he says, “I would not have you swayed at all by such considerations.” So comparatively modern a feeling is mercy, as a general rule, to a conquered enemy, especially when that enemy had once stood in the position of a friend. But a mistaken severity in this case, Diodotus argues, far from stamping out rebellion, might defeat its own object: it might drive to desperation any dependency which might possibly revolt in the future. Again, if they included the commons of Mitylene in the punishment, as had been decreed, they would be sacrificing the immense advantage which Athens now possessed, of being looked upon more or less as a friend by the commons of every state: she would lose the support in such cases of the masses, now almost always inclined to her interests. Let them put the leading citizens, whom Paches had sent home as the most guilty, formally on their trial, and let the rest live unharmed.—(III. 40.)

By a very small majority, the milder proposal of Diodotus was carried in the Assembly. But the order for the summary execution of all the citizens had been despatched the evening before to the admiral at Mitylenè, and the galley which carried it was already far on her way. Then began a race for life and death.

“At once they despatched another vessel in all haste, fearing that unless this second outstripped the other, it would find the town and its inhabitants already destroyed: for the first had the start by about a day and a night. The Mitylæan delegates had supplied the

second galley liberally with meal and wine, and promised large bounties to the rowers if they reached the island first; the men ate, as they sat at their oars, a mixture of meal with wine and oil, rowing and sleeping by relays. And as there chanced to be no wind against them, and the first galley made no great haste, as upon a hateful errand, while the other pressed on in this fashion, the one arrived only just so much in advance that Paches had read the letter containing the decree, and was about to put the order into execution, when the second reached shore after it, and stopped the massacre. So narrowly did Mitylenè escape from peril"—(III. 49.)

Even the tender mercies of this war were cruel. The main population of Mitylenè was spared; but those who had been sent prisoners to Athens as having led the revolt were put to death—upwards of a thousand of the most influential citizens. The fortifications of the place were dismantled, and its fleet confiscated. The whole island of Lesbos, except the one faithful town of Methymna, was divided into lots, which were assigned to Athenian citizens, who let them out to be farmed by the natives. If a terrible example could have bound the allies of Athens to their allegiance, the fate of Lesbos might well have afforded it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TERROR AT CORCYRA.

THE island of Corcyra was again to be the scene of troubles in which both the great contending Powers were concerned. Corinth had not lost sight of her ambitious and refractory daughter. Her fleet had carried off from the island, after the sea fight at the beginning of the war, some 8000 prisoners.* Of these, 250 belonged to the highest families; and these, probably to their own surprise, while their meaner countrymen were all sold for slaves, found themselves well treated, and held in a kind of honourable safe custody at Corinth. The Corinthians had their own object in view. In the fifth year of the war these men were sent home to their island, nominally on bail for a large promised ransom, but really, says Thucydides, "on condition of their undertaking to bring over the island to the Corinthians." They began by diplomatic intrigues; but they found the democratic party strong in the interests of Athens. Then followed a succession of the most bloody revolutions and counter revolutions. The aristocrats had recourse

* See p. 22.

to the "gospel of the dagger;" and having got rid in this fashion of their leading opponents, maintained themselves for a while in power. The arrival of envoys from Corinth encouraged the commons to rise upon their new masters; slaves were armed and promised liberty by both parties; street-fighting went on from day to day, with all the bitter ferocity which marks the struggles of men of the same blood when divided into hostile factions, the women of the proletariat taking their share in the fight, and hurling tiles from the houses on the heads of the aristocrats below. These latter, to cut off the approach to the arsenal which they held, set the town on fire. Fleets arrived both from Athens and the Peloponnese, to watch the turn of events, and take such measures as they might in support of their own partisans amongst the Coreyreans. But the Athenians were in too small force to do more than save the Coreyrean fleet from utter destruction in a fight which ensued against an overwhelming Peloponnesian force which drove them back into their harbour. But when a new admiral was sent out from Athens, the confederates—not daring to meet the naval strength of Athens upon anything like equal terms—sailed off towards home, leaving their unhappy friends of the aristocratical party to the mercy of their political enemies. Then, while the Athenian admiral Eurymedon coldly looked on from the harbour, for seven days a reign of terror prevailed at Corcyra. The commons, aided by foreign mercenaries, massacred every man whom they chose to consider an "aristocrat."

"They denounced them," says the historian, "as conspirators against the people: but many lost their lives owing to some private grudge, and others because money was owed them by their captors. And death was inflicted in all varieties of form; and no one horrible detail was omitted of all that is wont to happen in such a state of things,—and even more than this, for father killed son, and men were dragged from sanctuaries, or murdered in them: some even were walled up in the temple of Bacchus, and died there. So savage had the feud become."—(III. 81.)

It has been said with some truth of this history in general that its tone is cold and cynical—that, as a rule, the historian seems to occupy the position of a looker-on at the deadly strife that is rending the very heart of Greece, studying and describing its features something after the fashion in which a modern lecturer in anatomy is supposed to watch the struggles of some animal on whom he is making an experiment,—interested only in the demonstrations of his science, and insensible to, or careless of, the sufferings of its victims. It may be that to such an impassive and philosophical spirit we owe much of the admitted truthfulness of the narrative. But when Thucydides comes to record these days of terror at Coreyra, he checks the steady current of his narrative to draw a picture of the times which becomes all the more impressive because it comes from the hand of a keen observer who was not carried away by any sentimental enthusiasm, or tempted to write for sensational effect. In the remarkable chapters

which follow, and to which any translation can do but scant justice, though he has Coreyra and its factions before him as his immediate subject and example, it is plain that he speaks of a phase of national character which was fast being developed throughout all Greece by this civil war—for such, in many of its most deplorable features, was this struggle between Hellenic states which claimed a common origin, spoke a common language, and appealed to a common religion. The factions at Coreyra, which furnish the text of these chapters, have been not inaptly compared to the revolutionary “Clubs” of Paris; but this great difference must be borne in mind, that they were not peculiar to the democratic party.

“The states thus torn by faction displayed beyond all precedent a novelty of invention both in elaborating plots and in monstrous acts of vengeance. And men changed at will the ordinary meaning of words, to suit their actions. For unscrupulous daring was termed brave and good comradeship; a prudent hesitation was but specious cowardice; a general moderation was a general uselessness. A mad impetuosity was the proof of a manly spirit; caution in any enterprise was a sign of drawing back. The man who urged to cruelty was a trusty citizen; the man who would dissuade from it became himself suspected. He who plotted and succeeded was clever; he who suspected plots was cleverer still: while he who would have so ordered matters as that no plot should be necessary, was charged with breaking up his party, and being

afraid of his opponents. In short, the man who could forestall others in the commission of a crime, and he who incited to crime another who had never thought of it, were alike commended. Moreover, the ties of blood were not so close as the ties of party, because this latter bond found men readier for the most unscrupulous action. For such associations are formed not under the protection of ordinary laws, but in defiance of all established law, in the interests of selfish ambition; and fidelity between their members rests not on any sacred principle, but on the fact of having been accomplices in crime. Any fair proposal from an adversary was received with a cautious eye to his possible future action, not in any generous spirit.* Revenge upon an enemy was more highly valued than the having received no injury to avenge. And if oaths were employed at any time to ratify a convention, they were taken by either party only because there was no alternative at the moment, and held good just so long as that party gained no new strength; but as soon as a chance offered, whichever had the boldness first to seize it, if he could catch the other unprepared, wreaked his vengeance on him with more relish, on account of the pledge between them, than if it had been after fair warning; and congratulated himself not only on the safe opportunity he had found for an attack, but

* Arnold, in a note on this passage, appositely quotes a modern illustration: " 'Ne vous fiez-vous pas à la parole du roi?' lui disait M. de Lionne dans une conférence. 'J'ignore ce que veut le roi,' dit Van Brummig; 'je considère ce qu'il peut.'" —Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, ch. 9.

on the credit he should gain for cleverness besides, in having so cunningly overreached him. . . . So no party recognised any religious obligation, but those who succeeded in effecting some odious purpose under fair pretences were held in all the higher esteem. They who stood neutral became the victims of both parties—either because they would not join them, or out of jealousy that they should so escape. Thus, in consequence of these party factions, every species of baseness began to obtain throughout Greece, and simplicity, which goes most commonly with a noble nature, was ridiculed, and disappeared ; and the general habit was for men to stand on their guard against each other in a mutual distrust. For in settling a quarrel no man's word could be trusted, and no oath was held in awe.”—(III. 82, 83.)

The chapter which follows, and in which the state of morals induced by such revolutions as that in Coreyra is still further discussed, has given rise to a curious and interesting question. The old commentators detected peculiarities in its style and expressions which satisfied them of its not being the work of Thucydides himself, but only a clever imitation. Their opinion is endorsed by modern scholars: Arnold even calls it “a caricature of his style and manner.” It seems probable that it was inserted by a Christian student of Thucydides, of whom there were very many at Constantinople between the fourth and seventh centuries.

It may be convenient once more to break through the historian's arrangement into years, to get a clear

view of the end. The aristocrats of *Coreyra* were not yet finally disposed of. Some five hundred of them escaped, and with some hired mercenaries fortified themselves on a hill in the island called *Istoné*. Thence they commanded the country round, cut off supplies from the town, and otherwise harassed their enemies considerably. They asked support in vain from the *Corinthians*, who had sent them on their forlorn hope of regaining the island, and from the rest of the *Peloponnesians* whose cause they were serving ; but they maintained themselves there for nearly two years, when the place was stormed by an *Athenian* force, who were landed on the island to relieve their friends in the town from this continual state of local warfare. The little garrison of *Istoné* retired still higher up the mountain, but were at last obliged to surrender at discretion, agreeing "to abide the judgment of the people of *Athens*." Such terms did not meet the views of their relentless enemies at home. Emissaries from the democrats enticed some of the prisoners secretly to break their parole, and to make an attempt to escape ; told them that the *Athenian* generals meant to give them up to the mob ; and offered them a vessel to escape in. They fell into the snare ; were of course taken and brought back : the terms of capitulation were declared to have been violated, and the *Athenian* commanders gave them up to the tender mercies of their countrymen. *Thucydides* tells us what followed :—

“ When the *Coreyreans* got them into their hands,

they shut them up in a large building ; and afterwards bringing them out by twenty at a time made them pass, fettered together, through two rows of armed soldiers ranged on either side, while they were struck and stabbed by those in the ranks, wherever any man espied a personal enemy ; and men walked by the side carrying whips, with which they quickened the pace of any who seemed to move too slowly. As many as sixty they brought out and massacred in this fashion, without its coming to the knowledge of the others inside (for these fancied they were only removing them to some other quarter). But when they discovered the fact, from some one telling them, then they called aloud on the Athenians, and begged that they would slay them, if they willed it so to be. And they would not come out of the building any more, and said they would allow none to enter it so long as they could strike a blow. The Coreyreans had no mind themselves to force the doors, but climbed on the roof of the place, pulled off the tiling, and hurled tiles and shot arrows down on those within. These protected themselves as well as they could, and at the same time the majority began to despatch themselves, by thrusting into their throats the arrows which their enemies had discharged, or hanging themselves with the cordage of some beds which happened to be inside, or cutting strips from their clothes for the purpose. So, through the greater part of the night (for the night came on during this tragedy), they were making away with themselves in one fashion or other, or being shot down by the men on the roof. When it was day, the Coreyreans threw the

bodies, one upon the other, on drays, and carried them outside the town. All the women taken in the fort were sold for slaves. In such fashion were the Coreyreans from the mountain slaughtered by the populace, and the feud which had lasted so long was thus brought to a termination—for of one of the two parties there was scarcely a remnant left worth reckoning.”—(IV. 47, 48.)

Eurymedon—the same Athenian admiral who had lain quiet with his fleet in the harbour while a similar scene was enacted two years before—again looked on passively from his ships until his savage allies had glutted their revenge, and then moved off on his way to Sicily.

It is somewhat startling to turn from the calm and dispassionate account which Thucydides gives of the horrors which marked the conduct of both parties in these deadly struggles for power, to the remarks which Mr Grote has made upon them in what he calls “a discriminative criticism.” Everything which falls from such an authority is weighty, and must be received with respect. But when we find that he can see little in these Coreyrean horrors but “the work of a selfish oligarchical party, playing the game of a foreign enemy—aiming to subvert the existing democracy and acquire power for themselves, and ready to employ any measure of violence for the attainment of these objects”—when he speaks of the democratic faction as being “thrown upon the defensive,” and says that “their conduct as victors is only such as we might

expect in such maddening circumstances,"—we feel that we are not listening to the historian but to the politician. It is fair at least to the ordinary reader to warn him that such a judgment cannot justly be gathered from the pages of Thucydides. He has set before us clearly the bitter fruits of political faction carried to extremes by a fierce and crafty people; the recklessness of human life, the revenge, the cruelty, which marked the age, and which we know was not confined, as Thucydides would seem almost disposed to think, to Greece and its neighbourhood, under the pressure of intestine war. But he nowhere gives us reason to suppose that the guilt could be laid exclusively or mainly to the charge of either party in the struggle,—noble or plebeian, democrat or aristocrat, islander or Athenian.

CHAPTER IX.

DEMOSTHENES AND CLEON.

THESE sixth and seventh years of the war bring into the foreground one of the Athenian "generals at sea" (for this old English appellation perhaps best serves to express the real position of a naval commander of the Greeks) who is to play a considerable part in future operations both by sea and land. Demosthenes first distinguished himself in the summer of B.C. 426, by an attempt at the reduction of some of the Ætolian tribes, in the hope of making his way thence by land into Boeotia, and eventually breaking up altogether the Lacedæmonian interest in Northern Greece. But his attempt was very unfortunate: he was weak in archers and light troops generally, and his regular infantry could make no head against the harassing attacks of the swarms of mountaineers. Their guide was killed, and they lost their way. The main body found itself surrounded in a forest, which was set on fire by the enemy; and besides great loss among the auxiliaries, half the Athenian force fell there, together with the other general, Procles. "the most valuable lives," says Thucydides, "that were lost in all this

war." So much did Demosthenes blame himself for the disaster, that though his ships carried the survivors of the expedition home to Athens, he preferred himself to find some employment at the foreign station of Naupactus, "fearing to face the Athenians after all that had happened."

He retrieved his lost credit by degrees. First, he succeeded in saving Naupactus itself from projected attack by throwing into it reinforcements obtained by his influence with the neighbouring tribes. He was elected commander-in-chief of the native levies of Acarnanians, who had an old grudge to work out against their neighbours the Ambraciots, who were in the opposite interest, and defeated these latter in two important battles, from one of which such heaps of spoil were carried off that three hundred complete suits of armour fell to the share of Demosthenes alone.

He had no fear now of the verdict of his countrymen. When a fleet was under orders next year for Corcyra (as we have seen), and thence for Sicily, Demosthenes, though we are expressly told that he was living quietly as a private citizen since his return, had influence enough to obtain leave to accompany it, with extraordinary powers. He was to make such use of it as he saw occasion on the coasts of the peninsula. No wonder that such an anomalous authority was not cordially recognised by the officers in actual command. He had fixed his heart upon an uninhabited bluff on the south-west coast, some forty-five miles from Sparta, in the old Messenia, called Pylos, overhanging the

harbour well known in the history of modern warfare as Navarino. This point he had a desire to fortify; and there—within their ancestral territory—he had the design of planting some of his friends, the descendants of Messenian exiles in Naupactus, to be a permanent menace and annoyance to their hereditary enemies of Sparta. The actual commanders, Eury-medon and Sophocles, protested against such delay as tending to defeat the great objects of the expedition, and against the project itself as a wild one. But it so happened that a storm drove them into that very harbour; and now Demosthenes again put forward his idea, and again in vain. “There were plenty of unoccupied headlands on the peninsula,” said the commanders, “if he wanted to waste the public money in building forts upon them.” But Demosthenes, who evidently had the art of making himself popular, abroad or at home, persuaded the inferior officers and the men, who had nothing to do while detained in harbour, to begin the fortification by way of amusement. Very soon, in a rough way, by taking advantage of the natural ruggedness of the place, a fort was completed; and there Demosthenes, at his own request was left with a guard of five ships, while the rest proceeded on their voyage. His little garrison was soon strengthened by the arrival of two Messenian galleys with a few regular troops.

The Lacedæmonians heard of the occupation, and were at first inclined to treat the affair with ridicule, as the Athenian admirals had done. But Agis, the

Spartan king, took a more serious view of the matter. He was away in Attica, in command of the confederate force, which was engaged, now for the fifth season, in burning and destroying the crops of the unhappy farmers of Attica. The invaders themselves were suffering there in some degree; the corn was not so forward as usual, for the spring had been cold, and they had hard work to maintain themselves. The king evacuated the country after the comparatively short stay of fifteen days, and hurried back to meet the new emergency. The fleet was recalled from Corcyra; and as soon as possible an attack was made in strong force by land and sea upon Demosthenes's new stronghold. He had received sufficient warning, however, to send off for help to the Athenian admirals, and meanwhile made the best dispositions he could.

Across and in front of the harbour, forming its natural protection, lay the little island of Sphacteria (Sphagia). This was at once occupied by the Spartans, while they prepared to close the two narrow entrances to the harbour on each side of the island by galleys strongly lashed together with their beaks outwards, so as to keep off the expected Athenian fleet, and block up the garrison of Pylos.* Then they made their attack from within. Demosthenes drew up his little force at the landing-place—narrow and

* The present geography of Navarino and Sphagia can hardly be reconciled with this description. "There is no alternative," says Grote, "except to suppose that a great alteration has taken place in the two passages which separate Sphagia from the mainland, during the interval of 2400 years."

difficult—and fought at their head. The enemy attacked in divisions, for only a few galleys could take the shore at the same time; but attempt after attempt was repulsed. In vain did the historian's favourite hero, Brasidas—foremost here as always—do all that a hero could.

“Most conspicuous of all was Brasidas. He was in command of a galley; and when he saw the other captains and their steersmen hesitating because the landing was difficult, and cautious of wrecking their vessels, even where it did seem possible to take the shore, he shouted aloud that ‘it did not become them to be sparing of their timbers where the enemy had built a stone wall,’ and bade them even stave their galleys in, if need were, and force a landing. And he bade the allies not grudge to sacrifice their ships for the Lacedæmonians, in this hour of need, in return for their many obligations; but to run them ashore, and land at all hazards, and make themselves masters of the place and the garrison. Thus did he upbraid the others; and so, having forced his own helmsman to run his galley ashore, stepped on the gangway, and, as he was in the act of landing, was cut down by the Athenians, and fell apparently lifeless, covered with wounds. His shield slipped from his arm and fell into the sea; and when it was afterwards cast ashore, the Athenians picked it up, and used it in forming the trophy which they set up after repulsing the attack. Eager as the rest were to land, they could not do it; so difficult was the place, and so

firmly did the Athenians stand their ground and never give back.”—(IV. 11, 12.)

Thucydides remarks on the reversal of parts on this occasion,—the Athenians, whose pride was in their naval superiority, fighting so well on land, while the Lacedæmonians were now the attacking party by sea. These resolved, however, that their next attempt should be from the land side. But now the Athenian fleet returned to the rescue of the garrison, and all at once matters were entirely changed. They sailed into the harbour before the enemy had carried out their purpose of blockading the entrances, captured and destroyed some portion of their fleet, became themselves masters of the harbour, and so cut off the Lacedæmonian detachment who had been landed on the island from all intercourse with their friends on the mainland. The blockading party had in their turn become the blockaded.

The Lacedæmonians were in consternation. Their men on the island seemed to have only the choice between starvation and surrender. The Ephors the high council of State, superior in some respects even to the kings—came in person to Pylos to advise. They obtained an armistice, and sent ambassadors to Athens to try to negotiate a peace. Before even the armistice was granted, they had to put their entire naval force of sixty galleys into the hands of the Athenians as a guarantee of good faith, that so they might be allowed to supply their men in Sphakteria with daily rations

so long as the armistice should last, until the return of their ambassadors from Athens.

There is a proud humility in the language in which Thucydides has embodied the overtures made by the envoys of Lacedæmon. They appeal to the common experience of all men as to the fickleness of fortune. "We, who stand first in reputation of all Greeks, are come here to you, — we who at a time thought ourselves rather in a position to bestow what we now come to ask: simply because we have failed in calculations which would have been justified under ordinary circumstances." Let them beware, continued the speaker, of dreaming that fortune would always favour one side, or that war would always take the course which the belligerents expected or desired. Athens had now an excellent opportunity of showing moderation in her hour of triumph, and of leaving to posterity a lasting reputation for true wisdom as well as power. Bitter as their enmity had been, generosity might make them friends, — the driving men to extremities never would. The speaker adds a word, as well he might, on behalf of the unfortunate smaller states of each confederacy, "who were now fighting without clearly knowing which party was the aggressor." But he belies this unusual show of consideration for weaker powers by the selfish policy more than hinted at in his conclusion — that "if Athens and Lacedæmon were but agreed, they might be sure that the rest of Greece would know its own weakness too well not to show them the greatest deference."

The Athenian Assembly was too triumphant to be moderate. "They thought," says their historian, "that they could now have peace whenever they chose, and they were greedy after further advantage." Foremost of those who expressed this feeling loudly was Cleon, still as powerful as ever with the multitude. He persuaded them to insist on the restoration of the forts of the Megarians, Pegæ and Nisæa—dear to the hearts of the Athenian commons as Calais was to the English queen—with certain other acquisitions which they had been compelled to give up by the terms of that "Thirty Years' Peace" which had so lately been broken. The Lacedæmonians were not as yet sufficiently humbled to accept such conditions, and their envoys went back to Pylos.

The Athenians still retained possession of the enemy's fleet, regardless of all protest, on the real or pretended ground of some violation of the terms of armistice; and their own galleys cruised round Sphacteria day and night, giving no chance of relief or escape to the unfortunate prisoners there. But this constant blockade grew wearisome; the Athenians suffered from scarcity of water; in spite of all precautions, slaves were found who swam over from the mainland with scanty supplies of corn to the men on the island, or crossed from various points in small boats on stormy nights, tempted by large rewards; and Athens grew impatient. "Why was not a landing effected, and the men made prisoners at once?"

Then followed a curious episode in the war—a half-ludicrous triumph for the favourite of the Athenian

commons, and an endless subject of jest for the political satirists of the day. Cleon said, in one of his harangues, that "if their generals were but men, they would run their vessels in, and capture the people on the island; and if *he* were in command, he would do it."

"He aimed his words at Nicias, son of Niceratus, who was then general, and whom he hated," says the historian; for Nicias was the very opposite of Cleon, the representative of all that was moderate and respectable. Nicias at once bade him—so far as he was concerned—take what force he chose with him, and attempt it. How far either was in earnest at the outset seems doubtful. Cleon would have drawn back from his first challenge; but the more he seemed to try to escape from the position, the more strongly did both his supporters and his enemies insist on his carrying it out. Then he changed his mood: give him merely a body of auxiliaries—he would not ask to risk an Athenian's life in the service—and within twenty days he would bring these Spartans prisoners to Athens, or die in the attempt. "There was a good deal of merriment among the Athenians," says Thucydides, "at his boastful talk; all the moderate party, however, were delighted, calculating that one of two good things must be the result—they would either get rid of Cleon (which was what they rather hoped and expected), or, if they were disappointed in that opinion, they would get the Lacedæmonians into their hands." It is not difficult to understand that such a challenge from Cleon would be received by the Athenian mob

with a keen appreciation of the joke against the "moderates," and a half-humorous and half-serious encouragement to carry it out. But it is seldom that a practical jest is carried out on so grand a scale, or at such risk of national honour.

Cleon set out for Pylos; and, probably to the surprise of friends and foes alike, made good his words. He had asked to have Demosthenes associated with him in the command, because he was aware, the historian thinks, that he was already meditating a descent upon the island. A strong force of heavy-armed infantry were landed before daybreak in two divisions, at two separate points, who cut to pieces the enemy's out-post; and at dawn the light troops followed them, took advantage of all rising ground, and thence showered arrows and javelins on the enemy. The whole force thrown upon the island must have been near 10,000 men. For a while the Lacedæmonians maintained themselves in an old rude fortification at one end of the island, though their men were falling fast, and they were all weak from long privation; but at last they were taken in rear, their commander was killed, and his lieutenant mortally wounded; and the survivors lowered their shields and bowed their heads towards their assailants in token of submission. Within the twenty days, Cleon brought home his prisoners to Athens—two hundred and ninety-two men, of whom one hundred and twenty were citizens of Sparta. Nearly one-third of the detachment had fallen in their obstinate defence.

It is perhaps the most remarkable episode in the

whole war : and one does not feel sure that the story, well told as it is, is told quite fairly for Cleon. All that Thucydides says of his success is, "So Cleon's promise, insane as it was, was fulfilled." He would make it appear that Cleon was a mere braggart — that he was driven to carry out his boast quite against his will — and that he was favoured unexpectedly by circumstances ; and that the credit of the capture was due, after all, to Demosthenes and not to him. It is quite impossible to discuss, in these brief pages, a question which has interested and divided great historical authorities, and as to which we have very few facts, and very strong assertions ; but Mr Grote's defence of Cleon is at least well worth reading. He is clearly right on one point : if Cleon was a mere idle boaster, and not a competent soldier, it was a gross breach of trust in Nicias to resign his command to him so readily. That Cleon was violent and boastful may be readily believed, without impugning his military capacity ; and at Athens every political leader was almost of necessity a soldier also, and must be ready to take responsibility upon himself in the field as well as in the council. There is undoubtedly an exceptional bitterness, whether it be of prejudice or of honest contempt, in Thucydides's language about Cleon ; and this has led to the belief that Cleon was his personal enemy, and the chief agent in his banishment from Athens. Yet we have to remember, when we begin to suspect the historian of having for a moment forgotten his usual impartiality, that his narrative of the affair of Sphacteria was drawn up

in the first instance for a public who were cotemporary with the event itself; and that the satirists of the day—who are valuable witnesses if not always to facts, yet to the popular judgment of facts—more than endorse the historian's estimate of Cleon's exploit.

This passage in Greek history has a very curious parallel in our own. Our West India merchant-ships had long been harassed by the Spaniards, who made Porto Bello in New Granada their chief station. Admiral Hosier was sent with a fleet to cruise off that coast for the protection of British trade, but with orders not to attack the place. During a long inaction he lost his best officers and half his crews by disease, while he felt himself a laughing-stock to the Spaniards; and the chagrin and mortification are said to have finally broken his heart. Meanwhile, in 1739, Admiral Vernon, an Opposition member of the House of Commons—who seems to have been not unlike Cleon in character, “fierce and not ineloquent in debate, the delight of his own party,” and with a considerable share of “blunt impudence”—said that Porto Bello might easily be taken: nay, that *he* would undertake to do so with six ships, if *he* were given the command. Sir Robert Walpole, who was then Minister, “hoping to appease the popular clamour, and to get rid for a time of Vernon's busy opposition,” closed with the offer. Vernon went out, took the place, razed its fortifications, and returned to receive a popular ovation and the formal thanks of both Houses. The parallel holds good even further: Vernon failed afterwards, when put in com-

mand on the West India station, as Cleon did in Thrace.*

The surrender of a Lacedæmonian force, consisting in large proportion of citizens of Sparta, caused a profound sensation throughout the Greek communities. "Their opinion of the Lacedæmonians had always been that neither for famine nor for any other strait would they stoop to lay down their arms, but that they would die with their weapons in their hands, fighting to the last." Some professed not to believe, he goes on to say, that the men who surrendered were of true Spartan blood, like those who fell. "One inquirer asked, by way of insult, whether those who had been killed were all real Spartan gentlemen?" and was answered by one of the prisoners "that it would be a valuable arrow indeed which knew how to pick out the best men."

The occupation of Pylos was made permanent, by planting there a garrison of Messenians from Naupactus, who were admirably fitted, from their knowledge of the Lacedæmonian language and habits, to annoy and harass the surrounding district; the place would serve, too, as an asylum to such of the Lacedæmonian slaves (the Helots, consisting mainly of the descendants of the conquered Messenians) as might take the opportunity to desert. Nicias succeeded also in occupying another very important station on their enemy's

* This remarkable parallel was first noticed by a writer in the 'Philological Museum,' vol. ii. p. 704. The story is perhaps best known by Glover's (or Lord Bath's) ballad, "Hosier's Ghost," which seems to have been really written as a political squib.

coast—the island of Cythera (Cerigo)—and made this the base of his operations against the maritime towns. He retorted upon the Lacedæmonians their own strategies by a seven days' raid upon crops and cattle; while they on their part were forced to omit their usual invasion in the early summer of the year that followed the disaster at Sphacteria, because the Athenians had given warning that they would put the prisoners who had been taken there to death, if the enemy marched over their border. It was probably at this time that the Lacedæmonians carried out perhaps the most cruel and treacherous act of policy which history records. Many of these Helots had done them faithful service in the war; but now, with these new places of refuge open for them at Pylos and Cythera, they were under strong temptation to throw off their yoke. Let Thucydides tell the story, though he does it in the coldest words, and with no note of reprobation: -

“They made proclamation that they would select [from the Helots] those who could show that they had done them the best service in war, in order to give them their freedom; applying a sort of test, as thinking that those who had the spirit to come forward first to claim their freedom were the very men who were most likely to rise upon their masters. So they picked out two thousand, who crowned themselves with garlands and made the round of all the temples as freedmen: and soon afterwards they got rid of them all, and yet no man knew in what fashion they were severally made away with.”—(IV. 80.)

So utterly disheartened were the Lacedæmonian Leaders, that they sent again to negotiate a peace, but again in vain. Athens was determined to push her good fortune to the uttermost, and to dictate her own terms; and she thus lost an opportunity of terminating the war with honour and advantage which never occurred to her under such favourable circumstances again.

CHAPTER X.

THUCYDIDES AT AMPHIPOLIS.

IN the eighth year of the war, there came an appeal to the Lacedæmonians from Thrace. The subject-allies of Athens in that quarter were always restless, and only wanted some external support to break out into open revolt against her rule. Perdiccas of Macedonia, too, having a quarrel of his own on hand with a neighbouring prince, offered to join the Chalcidians of Thrace in paying and maintaining a body of troops from Lacedæmon, if they could be sent; and they specially asked that Brasidas, as knowing the country and being highly popular, should be sent out in command. He had by this time recovered from his wounds at Pylos, and was ready enough to go. But the enterprise was not much favoured by his government. He seems to have undertaken it very much on his own responsibility. All that he could obtain was the arming of 700 of the Helots—whom, under present circumstances, the authorities at Sparta were glad enough to spare—and leave to raise volunteers in the country. With these—some 1700 men in all—he set out by forced marches through Thessaly,

favoured by some of the chiefs, and escaping all opposition (though most of the tribes were friendly to the Athenians), alike by the rapidity of his movements and the tact with which he persuaded them of the harmless character of his expedition. So he safely reached Dium, under Mount Olympus, and there effected a junction with Perdiccas, against whom the Athenians, hearing of this movement, had already declared war. But the objects of Perdiccas and of Brasidas were different, and their co-operation did not last long.

His first operation was against the colony of Acanthus, where a party was ready to receive him. Our author says that "for a Lacedæmonian, Brasidas was not a bad speaker." He made a speech on this occasion which at least showed tact and good sense. He began with the popular assertion that he was come "to liberate Greece." He expressed his surprise that they were not unanimous in welcoming him: he had come a long way, and at much risk, for their sakes; he was not there as a partisan of the oligarchical party; all should be guaranteed their rights and liberties, if they accepted the alliance of Sparta. But he could not allow so important a city to damage the great cause of independence by its cowardice in not accepting such an offer, or permit Acanthus to continue to contribute revenue to the enemy: if they declined his overtures, he must, very reluctantly, use force.

Either his first or his last arguments had the desired effect. Acanthus changed its allegiance, and Brasidas occupied the town. Some of its weaker neighbours

followed its example, and others were reduced by force.

But the great stronghold of Athenian power and influence in those quarters was Amphipolis — “the city-looking-both-ways” — which, with its adjacent port at Eion, commanded the passage of the river Strymon, and was the key to the commerce of the interior, and the depot for ship-timber from the neighbouring forests of Thrace. Thucydides tells us that the town of his own day was the second attempt which the Athenians had made to form a settlement there; and the importance attached to the position may be gathered from the fact that a body of no less than 10,000 colonists had gone out from Athens to occupy it in the first instance, all of whom were cut off by the native tribes.

Amphipolis was destined to be a fateful name to three of the best-known actors in this war. It was the scene of our historian's first campaign, so far as we know, and certainly of his last. He gives a very brief, and scarcely a satisfactory, account of it. His personal history and military reputation depend so much upon it, that it is fair, in the first place, to give his own few words. Brasidas had hoped to take the place by surprise, with the aid of a party inside the walls who were prepared to betray it to him.

“Meanwhile, the party opposed to these traitors in conjunction with Eucles, the commander who had come to them from Athens to defend the place, sent off to the other officer who was in command in

Thrace and its neighbourhood.—Thucydides, son of Olorus, who wrote this History, and who was then at Thasos, an island about half a day's sail from Amphipolis, —urging him to come to their relief. As soon as he heard it, he set sail at once with seven ships which happened to be there, hoping to reach Amphipolis before any capitulation took place, or in any case to save Eion. Brasidas meanwhile, fearing the arrival of this naval reinforcement from Thasos, and hearing that Thucydides had a property in the working of the gold mines in that part of Thrace, and from that circumstance possessed great influence amongst the inhabitants, made every effort to be beforehand with him, if possible, in making himself master of the town; lest, if Thucydides arrived, the commons of Amphipolis, expecting that he would raise succours for them both by sea and from Thrace, and so secure them, would not surrender.”—(IV. 104.)

Brasidas offered freedom and an independent government to all who chose to remain at Amphipolis, and liberty to withdraw, with all their property, to those who preferred to do so; and his terms were at once accepted. The author proceeds:—

“So on these terms they surrendered the city; and late that evening Thucydides and his galleys reached Eion. Brasidas had just taken possession of Amphipolis, and was within one night of taking Eion; for had not the fleet come promptly to its relief, he must have had it in the morning. Subsequently, Thucy-

dides so ordered matters as to secure Eion, not only for the present, in case Brasidas should attack it, but for the future as well; receiving there all who chose to come in from the town above, in accordance with the terms. Brasidas made a sudden descent by the river with a considerable number of boats, on the chance of seizing the point of land which reached out from the fortifications, and of so commanding the entrance, and made an attack at the same time by land, but was repulsed in both.”—(IV. 107.)

It was for his conduct on this occasion that the writer was either banished from Athens, or expatriated himself to avoid a public sentence. He has mentioned this fact in as cold and brief terms as those in which he describes the events which led to it. He only alludes to it incidentally, when speaking of the opportunities he had of watching and recording the issue of the struggle at his leisure. “It was my fate to be an exile from my country for twenty years, after the operations at Amphipolis.”* There is no word here of complaint or of self-excuse; and this reticence has been noted as a silent admission of culpability. It might be observed, on the other hand, that there was no necessity for his thus placing on record, in a work which he hoped would be to his countrymen “a heritage for ever,” the cause of his exile, if he felt it to have been discreditable to himself. The question of the degree of blame to be attached to Thucydides for the loss of Amphipolis has been keenly discussed; and it has

* V. 26.

been assumed that he was in fact occupied in looking after his own mining interests in Thasos, and that this was why the ships "happened to be there," when they ought to have been at Eion. But the difficulty of forming a just estimate of military operations even when all the facts are recently before us, and the mistakes continually made by civilian criticism, are so notorious, that few sensible readers will be disposed to sit in judgment upon a campaign which took place more than two thousand years ago, and as to the details of which we have really no information. It is asserted by one of the biographers of the historian that Cleon was instrumental in his banishment, and that personal feeling on that account explains much of the exceptional severity with which Cleon's character is handled in this history of the war. It is at least very probable that Cleon, wielding as he did a strong popular influence, did bring it to bear against an unsuccessful commander whose political views were the opposite to his own. But nearly all that is certain in the matter is this — that had Thucydides been more successful as a soldier, we might have seen nothing of this history.

Thucydides disappears altogether from the scene, after playing this brief and unsuccessful part. He had to leave others to work out the fortunes of Athens, while they were to owe to his pen much of the interest which they retain to this day for the modern student and reader.

He candidly and simply admits that the news of the loss of Amphipolis was received at Athens with "great

dismay." They saw in it the prelude to a general defection of their allies on the Thracian border. In a great measure it was so. Everywhere Brasidas announced himself as the liberator of those to whom he appealed. Uniting in his own character all the best qualities of an officer, gentleness and moderation combined with the most daring personal courage, he inspired confidence in all with whom he had to do ; and town after town either listened to his proposals, or even sent secret messages to invite him to organise and support a revolution. News had reached Thrace, too, of the disastrous defeat of the Athenians by the combined forces of Boeotia at the battle of Delium*—of which the historian gives a full account, but on which we must not linger—and they came to the rash conclusion that this was the beginning of the end. "The extent of their miscalculation of the power of Athens only became evident to them by her subsequent achievements," says Thucydides, in one of his most obscure sentences ; "they judged rather from their own groundless wishes, than from any safe calculation. For when men earnestly desire a thing, they are wont to indulge their hope of it without much consideration, and to put aside what is disagreeable by a process of reasoning which admits no argument on the other side." As fast as they could, the Athenians threw garrisons into the towns which still retained their allegiance ; while Brasidas on his part sent home for reinforcements. He saw all the advantages of Amphipolis as a naval station, and would at once have begun to build a fleet of war-galleys in the river, but was foiled

* IV. 90, &c.

in his scheme for a great foreign campaign by the jealousy—so Thucydides very briefly tells us—of “some of the great men at home.” With the spring came an armistice for a year, mainly on the principle of the *uti possidetis*; both parties being now desirous of peace, the one to check the rapid course of Brasidas’s conquests, the other to recover their valuable prisoners taken on Sphacteria, connected as they doubtless were with the leading families in Sparta.

The armistice was not altogether strictly kept on either side, and the war, though suspended in other quarters, went on in Thrace. Reinforcements were sent thither by both the contending powers. And Nicias, who will be remembered as the antagonist of Cleon in Athenian politics, makes his first prominent appearance in a military capacity, as one of the commanders of a strong Athenian force which was landed on the coast to relieve or recover some of the towns which had been attacked by Brasidas. When the year of truce had expired without any step having been taken on either side towards a lasting peace, the war was resumed; though at first, as it would appear, somewhat reluctantly and slackly on both sides. The public feeling both at Athens and Lacedæmon was in favour of negotiation; but, if we may trust Thucydides, there was one man in each state whom the circumstances of the time had raised to a commanding position—though the circumstances were very different in the two cases—and to whom peace was unpalatable. “Cleon and Brasidas,” says the historian, “were both strongly opposed to peace: the latter because he owed all his success and

his honours to war; the former because, when times were quiet, he thought he should be more readily detected in his malpractices, and find his calumnies not so greedily believed." * There seems an unfairness here not only to Cleon, whom Thucydides may have been inclined always to judge hardly, but to Brasidas as well, to whom he is so evidently disposed to do full justice. It is surely quite possible, and quite in accordance with all we know of Brasidas, that besides the personal ambition and love of distinction which mark every able soldier, he may also have had larger and more patriotic aspirations; he may have longed to carry the war to a triumphant conclusion, to destroy the Athenian supremacy in Thrace, now that he had made so promising a breach in it, and to make his own city, and not Athens, once more the centre of the power and influence of the Hellenic name. It is not easy, again, to see why war should in itself have such attractions for a man like Cleon. If he lacked, as Thucydides would have us think, and as even his advocate Mr Grote thinks, the abilities of a commander, he was risking his own reputation daily in a state where not to be a soldier was to be nothing: and it is needless to say that a desire for national glory, and even a sensitiveness to national honour, are not unfrequently found in the most violent of popular demagogues.

Be this as it may, if Brasidas and Cleon were really the foremost advocates of the renewed war, they were also amongst its very first victims. Whether by his

* V. 16.

own wish or not,—whether the office was thrust upon him, as in some sense it was in the matter of Sphacteria, or whether he sought it for himself, as Thucydides asserts,—Cleon went out, soon after the termination of the armistice, with an imposing force to grapple with Brasidas in Thrace. He began successfully. He took the town of Torone, which Brasidas had wrested from Athenian rule—that general, like Thucydides at Amphipolis, was now too late to save it—sent the Peloponnesian garrison and its citizens, 700 in all, prisoners to Athens, and sold its women and children for slaves. The capture of another town followed; and then Cleon took up his quarters at Fion, watching his opportunity for Amphipolis, and waiting for reinforcements which he hoped to get from Perdicas, who had once more transferred his fickle friendship to the Athenians. Brasidas meanwhile had been strengthening his army with Thracian mercenaries, and now threw himself into Amphipolis.

Cleon, says the historian, waited till his army grew impatient, and almost forced him to move upon the town: so long as that was in the hands of the enemy, the honour of Athens was unavenged, and her Thracian interests in danger. He advanced **near** enough to reconnoitre the town and its position, and to regret that he had not brought engines with him to take it. He had made up his mind to retire his forces for the time, to wait for his expected reinforcements, and then to surround the place on all sides, and sweep down all resistance by force of numbers: in fact, says Thucydides, to repeat the tactics of Sphacteria;

though it is not easy to see exactly the force of the comparison.

Brasidas determined on a sudden dash, at the head of a picked detachment, right upon the centre of the enemy's line, as they were on the point of retiring, not dreaming of any sally from the town. Before he delivered his attack, he made his last speech to his lieutenant, Clearidas, and the whole body of troops, Spartans and allies, drawn up within the walls. His oration was soldier-like, and to the point. He told them his plan: after he had made his dash, Clearidas was to throw open the gates on the other side, and charge *with* the main body. He and his Spartans were to behave—as Spartans always did; and the allies were to choose between proving themselves worthy to fight by the side of freemen, or remaining the “slaves of Athens.”

From the higher ground where Cleon was now halting, the interior of the town was plainly visible. The movements now going on within attracted his attention: scouts who had ventured close up to the walls—for no defenders showed themselves—could see under the gates the close-packed feet of men and horses as if prepared for a sally in force. Cleon had no mind for a general engagement until reinforced, and gave orders to withdraw to the old position at Eion. The change of movement was made in haste; and at that critical moment Brasidas and his party made their sally, taking their enemy's line in flank as they moved off. Clearidas followed up the attack. The Athenian left wing, which was leading towards Eion, broke at once and

fled. The right re-formed on the hill, and made a stout resistance for some time; but the light-armed Thracians showered missiles upon them from all sides, and at last they too broke their ranks, and the survivors made their way by various mountain-paths back to their quarters at Eion. Cleon was with the right wing, but took to flight at once, and met with an ignominious death at the hands of a native targeteer.

The Athenians had lost six hundred of their best men; the victors only seven. But their victory that day was turned into mourning. Among the seven, carried off the field early in the action, mortally wounded, was Brasidas. "They bore him, still alive, into the city: he lived to hear that his side was victorious, but soon after became unconscious, and expired." He was buried with unusual honours—"at the public expense, within the city, in front of the present market place; and from that day forth the men of Amphipolis, having fenced his tomb, sacrifice to him as a hero, and honour him with games and offerings every year." They even adopted him for their founder, instead of the Athenian Hagnon, who had been the original leader of the colony: Hagnon had but built them walls; Brasidas had laid the foundations of their liberty. Unanimous consent of friends and foes alike has pronounced Brasidas the hero of the war: he is almost the only Spartan since the days of Leonidas round whom anything like a halo of romance has gathered; and there was probably something of the old heroic type in his person and bearing as well

as in his character, since Plato, in his 'Symposium,' has compared him with the "perfect knight" of classical legend—the faultless Achilles.

Thucydides considers that the deaths of Cleon and Brasidas removed the great obstacle to the peace which had been so long talked of. The majority on both sides were anxious for it, each having their special reasons for uneasiness, and both being tired of the long war. The Lacedæmonians knew that their Helot population was restless: their long truce with Argos (which had been neuter in this war) was on the point of expiring, and they had a not unfounded suspicion that Argos might seek to form a new confederacy, of which she herself should be the head. Repeated conferences were held during the winter. At a convention of the confederate Peloponnesians, the votes of the large majority were for immediate negotiations—Corinth and Megara being among the few dissentients, the former still implacably jealous, and the latter dreading the final result when Athens should find leisure and opportunity to deal with her alone. At the beginning of the following spring, just ten years after the first invasion of Attica, the treaty known as the Peace of Nicias was concluded, for fifty years. Conquests and prisoners on both sides were to be given up, except such places as had accepted terms of capitulation; so that the Thebans would still hold Plataea, while Athens retained possession of Nisaea, the port of the Megarians. But its stipulations were never carried into effect. The Thracians refused to give up Amphipolis, though

the Lacedæmonians did all they could to secure its restoration to Athens, withdrawing their own garrison at once. The other more powerful allies of Lacedæmon repudiated the terms altogether, and the general treaty was superseded by a defensive alliance, for the same term of fifty years, between Athens and Sparta only.

CHAPTER XI.

ARGOS.

THE Peace of Nicias, as it was called, concluded prospectively for fifty years, lasted somewhat less than seven. Even during that period, the state of things was not really peace at all, as Thucydides remarks, but merely a suspension of active hostilities between Athens and Sparta, and that disturbed by mutual suspicions and discontent. Athens had restored the prisoners of Sphakteria—the hostages who had been so valuable to her as a material guarantee; but she had not got back—for Sparta had declared herself not in a position to give back—her own town of Amphipolis; and her dissatisfaction was intense. As to the rest of the Peloponnesian confederacy, so many states had refused to accept the original treaty, and their confidence in Sparta as a head had been so materially shaken, that they began to turn their eyes towards Argos as a possible new leader for Greece. With her resources fresh and unexhausted, having been resting while others were fighting, and with all the prestige of a traditional supremacy as old as the siege of Troy, she formed a natural rallying-point for the smaller states.

Corinth, the leader of the malecontents, had sent her envoys to Argos straight from the last congress of the confederates; and, after some secret negotiations, a new league was formed, of which Argos was to be the head, and Corinth, Elis, and others of less importance, were to be members. The Spartans became alarmed, and a party there endeavoured to make a separate alliance for their own state with Argos; but, owing to a misunderstanding, the project failed. In fact, Argos for the time seemed mistress of the situation, for all Greece was suing for her favours. Advances were made to her from Athens, where a young man had just come forward into public life who was to play a brilliant but mischievous part among his fellow-citizens. Alcibiades is introduced to us by the historian with the same abruptness as Pericles; he considers him, no doubt (as he must here be considered), already well known to his readers by name and repute. Connected with Pericles by the mother's side through the same great house of Alcmaeon, he was a very different man from his great relative. Strikingly handsome and accomplished like him, clever and ambitious, he was utterly devoid of moral principle and of anything like earnest patriotism. He now warmly advocated a renunciation of the treaty with Sparta, and an immediate alliance with Argos. Partly, Thucydides thinks, because he really thought such a course was best for the interests of Athens; "but," continues the historian, "also because he was opposed to the late treaty from a feeling of jealousy, because the Lacedaemonians had negotiated it through the agency

of Nicias and Laches, while they passed him over on account of his youth, and did not treat him with the respect due to the old public connection of his family with their city—a connection which, though his grandfather had renounced it, he had himself thought to renew by his attention to their prisoners from the island.” Alcibiades asserted that the real object which Sparta had in view, in proposing the existing treaty, was to prevent Athens from obtaining Argos as an ally. He induced this latter state to send proposals to Athens, which he supported by the most unscrupulous stratagem. Sparta, thoroughly alarmed, had sent her own envoys to Athens at the same time to remonstrate against this new confederacy. In a private interview, Alcibiades represented himself as the supporter of Spartan interests, won their confidence, and suggested to them a line of dissimulation which he was immediately the first to denounce in the public assembly. In spite of the strong opposition of Nicias and others, a treaty between Athens and Argos, in which Elis was also included—“for a hundred years”—was finally arranged; though it was not construed as necessarily putting an end to the existing peaceful relations with Sparta.

Some minor hostilities, during which a fruitless effort was made by Athens to open negotiations for a general peace, were followed by an invasion of the territory of Argos by the Lacedæmonians in full force, supported by large contingents of their Corinthian and other allies. They succeeded in throwing themselves between the Argive army and the city of Argos, and,

in fact, nearly surrounding them in their position. The Argives, however, obtained an armistice from Agis, the Spartan king, who was commander-in-chief, and he withdrew from his position of advantage. "The Lacedæmonians followed him," says our author, "because he was in command, in obedience to law, but they blamed him loudly amongst each other: for this was the finest army of Greeks which up to that time had ever been assembled; and it presented that appearance thoroughly while it was in full strength at Nemea—all picked men of their respective nationalities, and a match apparently not only for the Argive league, but for another added to that."* But, as a remarkable instance how little military tactics and positions are understood, in all times, except by the few experts, the mass of the Argives, Thucydides tells us, were equally angry with their generals for allowing (as they supposed) the enemy to escape. There can be little doubt that the historian was in the immediate neighbourhood of Mantinea at the time of the battle, and had seen the array of the confederated forces with his own eyes.

The armistice was tacitly annulled by both combatants; and the Argives, now strongly reinforced by a division of Athenians (which was accompanied by Alcibiades himself in some civil capacity), marched into the central plain of the Peloponnese, known as a district by the name of Arcadia, but where the two powerful towns of Mantinea and Tegea were now at feud—the latter adhering to Lacedæmon, while Man-

* V. 60.

tineia had joined the new Argive league. The Lacedæmonians hurried with all the troops they could muster, Helots included, and "by a more rapid march than they had ever been known to make before," to defend their Arcadian ally; and before Mantinea the armies of the two confederacies met at last in a bloody and decisive battle. Each commander of the allies on both sides harangued his own troops before the engagement, excepting only the Spartan king. His men, singing their national war-songs, "exhorted each other to remember all their cunning, as brave men should, knowing that long training in action is a better security than an extempore exhortation, however well expressed in words." The historian tells us how "the Argives and their allies moved forward rapidly and with excitement, while the Lacedæmonians marched slowly, to the music of a number of pipers, as is their established custom, not from any religious feeling, but that they may advance in even line and keeping step, and that their ranks may not be broken—as is very much wont to be the case with large armies when they advance." * The writer gives us here also a short professional criticism on the military tactics of the day. All armies, he says, thrust out the line too much by their right when they close; because every man tries to protect his right (where he has no shield) by the shield of his right-hand man. The Lacedæmonians gained a complete victory, and piled arms and erected a trophy on the field of battle. The enemy lost in all 1100 men, including both the Athenian commanders:

* V. 70.

the loss of the Lacedæmonians was supposed to have been not more than 300.

This victory restored at once the honour and prestige of the Lacedæmonian name. Men now began to argue, says the historian, "that they had been worsted by accident, but in spirit they had been always the same." To Argos the immediate result was curious, and probably unexpected. In that state there was a party which had always been in favour of alliance with Lacedæmon. The picked body of 1000 heavy armed infantry, a kind of *garde noble* composed exclusively of young men of the higher classes, had been victorious in their own quarter of the battle, had broken the left wing of the enemy, and maintained the honour of their native city. They seem now to have had influence enough with their fellow citizens to effect a bloodless revolution, to put down the democracy, to break with democratic Athens, and to join their late conquerors, the more aristocratic and conservative Lacedæmonians, with whom an alliance was concluded for the favourite term of fifty years. It lasted some few months. Then the commons of Argos rose against the oligarchy, regained their power, and put their city again in alliance with Athens. They even began to build long walls down from the city to the harbour, so as to be able in future to communicate easily with their powerful friends by sea; but these works the Lacedæmonians succeeded in destroying.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FATE OF MELOS.

THE Ægean Sea (or, as we now call it, the Archipelago) has been fairly described as being at this period "an Athenian lake." But the island of Melos formed a striking exception. It was a Lacedæmonian—*i.e.*, a Dorian—colony, alien in race and habits from its neighbours of Ionian descent, and had at first been neutral in this contest. The Athenians had sent a small squadron there in the sixth year of the war, and tried to enforce submission by ravaging their lands, but without making any impression on their stubborn independence. They now sent a stronger force, but with orders to treat with the inhabitants before committing any act of hostility. This led to a curious conference, which the author professes to report in full, between the Melian authorities and the Athenian envoys, who were not admitted to an audience in the popular assembly of the island. The dialogue, too long for reproduction here, is almost dramatic. The Athenians request that they may be allowed to state their propositions and arguments *seriatim*, and to meet any objections in detail. After some preliminary

fencing, the Athenian spokesman is made to use the following language, to which no objection could possibly be made on the ground of ambiguity or lack of plain dealing:—

“Well, we have no intention on our part to set forth a long story (to which you would give no credit), with plausible assertions of our right to assume this supremacy after we had broken the power of the Mede, or of our coming against you now because we are the injured party; nor do we want to hear from you that, though colonists from Lacedæmon, you have not joined her in this war, or that you have done us no harm—that would not affect our determination. But we advise you to act in accordance with the real sentiments of both parties, and to make the best terms you can under the circumstances; for you know, and we know, that, in men’s dealings with each other, abstract right is considered only when both stand on equal terms: in other cases, the stronger party exact all they can, and the weaker have to give way.”—(V. 89.)

The Melians submit that, even as a question of expediency, it is not well for the stronger to be too overbearing: the Athenians would be setting a precedent which might some day be turned against themselves, in case of a reverse of fortune. The Athenians, in reply, beg the islanders not to trouble themselves on that point -- the future of Athens they are content to risk for themselves. For the present, the submission of the Melians *is* for the advantage of both parties: it will save them-

selves much suffering, and Athens will thereby gain a subject instead of having to destroy an enemy. The Melians ask why they may not be allowed to remain in a state of friendly neutrality? No,—to recognise such a position would be a confession of weakness on the part of the Athenians: it would imply an inability to reduce them by force. The Melians argue that if Athens will risk so much for empire, they themselves are surely justified in risking something for independence: they are answered,—it is a question for them not of honour, but of life or death. They remind the Athenians that, after all, the fortune of war is always uncertain: the reply is, that nothing is so ruinous to men and states as hope, when hope means only dependence on the chapter of accidents; let them “not show the folly of those who, when they might save themselves by human prudence, take refuge in visionary dreams, like soothsaying and oracles, which only ruin those who trust them.” The Melians contend that they have reasonable ground of hope, in their own case: the gods will aid the right, and the Lacedæmonians will not fail to succour them—from a sense of honour, if for no other reason. The Athenian answers something in the Napoleonic spirit, that the gods are on the whole “in favour of strong battalions:” being much given to maintain their own dominion by the strong hand. As to the notion that the Lacedæmonians will help them out of a sense of honour,—“we bless your innocent hearts,” says the speaker, “but we don’t envy your common sense;” the Lacedæmonians have too shrewd

a regard for their own interests to encounter Athens by sea in defence of a colony. The colonists — whose argument grows sensibly weaker and less confident — reply that the Lacedæmonians could avenge themselves on Athens by land. The Athenians close the discussion by strongly advising the Melians to reconsider seriously their intention of resistance. The latter continued resolute, however, in their refusal of submission, though they still offered to remain neutral : and the Athenian envoys retired to their own lines, after an ominous warning that “men who staked their confidence on such things as Lacedæmonians, and fortune, and hope,” and suchlike broken reeds, were like to find themselves bitterly disappointed. So it proved in the result. Works of circumvallation were immediately begun, and the place was closely invested by land and sea ; the Lacedæmonians never stirred to save them ; and although the Melians twice broke through the besiegers’ lines and carried in provisions, they were reduced in the course of the following winter to surrender at discretion. The Athenians slaughtered all the men in cold blood, and made slaves of the women and children : and their historian relates the fact without a word of reprobation. There does not appear to have been, in this case, even a reference to the decision of the Assembly at Athens. Atrocious as such an act would appear to us, in the case of prisoners of war who had surrendered at discretion, it was not repugnant to the savage war code of the day. The islanders had their fate, in case of resistance, set before them in very plain words by the

Athenian speaker; they knew what had been done by the Lacedæmonians at Plataea, and by the Athenians at Mitylenè; and though they remonstrate strongly against the whole proceeding as an unwarrantable aggression, they enter no special protest against the cruelty of the alternative, and make their election with all the consequences before their eyes.*

The insolent frankness with which the Athenian in the dialogue is made to put forward the principle that "might makes right" has led a very early critic to suspect that Thucydides, writing in the bitterness of exile, chose to set forth the policy of Athens in the most invidious colours.† Such a charge is highly improbable: there was nothing to have prevented the historian from doing the same in other passages of his work which internal evidence shows to have been written under the same circumstances. But though the principle is here asserted in language almost brutal in its directness, it is the principle which, veiled in a sophistry more or less transparent, appears in some shape on every occasion when the Athenians come forward

* Bp. Thirlwall's remark upon the massacre at Melos is sufficiently caustic: "The milder spirit of modern manners would not have punished men, who had been guilty of no offence but the assertion of their rightful independence, more severely than by tearing them from their families, and locking them up in a fortress, or transporting them to the wilds of Scythia. But our exultation at the progress of humanity may be consistent with a charitable indulgence for the imperfections of a lower stage of civilisation."

† Dionysius, *Judicium de Thucyd.*, pp. 37-42.

either as complainants or apologists. They had gained their empire fairly,—they meant to keep it : it was a despotism, which admitted no resistance ; and the laws of justice and humanity had force only amongst equals under equal circumstances : they had no place in the relations of weak states to the stronger.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EXPEDITION TO SICILY.

WITH his sixth book, Thucydides begins what might be called the history of the decline and fall of Athens. In this and the following book the interest of his story culminates; and at the conclusion of the seventh he brings us, with a rapidity of narration which is perhaps intentional, to the collapse (for it is little less) of that remarkable empire whose growth and strength he has been tracing. The tale of the Athenian expedition against Syracuse becomes in his hands one of the most perfect dramas in history, and is told, from introduction to catastrophe, with the most consummate skill.

We must go back some ten years, in order to trace the first interference of Athens in the affairs of Sicily, which was to exercise so fatal an influence upon her fortunes in the sequel. That island was largely occupied, especially on the southern and eastern coasts, by prosperous colonies from Greece; and of these, some were of Dorian and others of Ionian race. The same division of sympathies existed, therefore, among the Greeks in Sicily as in the mother country. At the beginning of the war, Sparta had sent a requisition to

the Dorian sea-coast towns, the chief of which were Syracuse and Agrigentum, to furnish a contingent of war-galleys: but they seem to have contented themselves with taking the opportunity of attacking their Ionian neighbours on the island. One of these, Leontini, in the fifth year of the war, had appealed for aid to Athens against the aggressions of Syracuse. A small squadron was sent with the further important object of stopping the exportation of corn from Sicily into the Peloponnese, and of ascertaining what chance there might be of reducing the whole island. There was not much result either from this or from a subsequent expedition, beyond a temporary occupation of Messenè, at that time a town of not much importance. Athenian and Syracusan squadrons had occasional indecisive engagements in Sicilian waters; but the more important expedition sent out under Eurymedon had been diverted, as may be remembered, by the descent upon Pyles, and arrived on the coast of Sicily too late in the season for any large operations.*

In the eighth year of the war, the internal feuds of the island being for the time in abeyance, a congress of representatives from most of the Sicilian towns was held, with a view to a general pacification. The leading spirit in the congress was Hermocrates of Syracuse, a man of eminent abilities and high personal character, representing, however, only one political interest in his native city—the oligarchical. In the speech with which the historian has furnished him (we can hardly suppose that, in the case of a Sicilian speaker, any-

* See p. 110.

thing beyond the merest outline of his argument can have been preserved), he urges strongly upon all his countrymen—Dorians, Ionians, or others—the paramount necessity of union among themselves in the presence of a foreign enemy, always on the watch to take advantage of their internal quarrels.* He warns them that the ultimate aim of Athens is not the support of Ionian colonists, but nothing less than the subjugation of the island. He bids them all remember that, whether Dorians or Ionians, they were Sicilians first. “I make considerable allowance,” he says, “for the Athenians, in these ambitious designs and schemes of conquest: it is not those who aspire to empire that I blame, but those who are only too ready to make submission. It is the nature of men, everywhere and always, to lord it over those who yield, but to have a rare of those who hold their own.” The advice was taken—for the time; and the Athenian commanders, having assented to the general treaty of pacification, left the coasts of Sicily. But the Athenian Assembly, indignant at the disappointment of their projects, and believing, or pretending to believe, that their officers had been bribed, punished them by exile on their return. An attempt was subsequently made on the part of Athens to support an attack on Syracuse by some of her neighbours, but without success.

But now, in the sixteenth winter of the war, an expedition on a large scale, with the scarcely veiled design of a complete subjugation of the island, was proposed and debated at Athens. A deputation from

the town of Segestæ, asking aid against Syracuse, and promising money for the war, furnished the pretext. But the real object of its chief promoters, among whom Alcibiades stood foremost, was the extension of their foreign dominion—it might be, not only to Sicily but to Carthage. It was determined to send a fleet of sixty galleys under Alcibiades, Nicias, and Lamachus, not only to succour their Ionian allies, but with the wide instructions “to do what seemed best for Athenian interests in Sicily.” Few of the Athenians, as their historian admits, knew much about the extent and resources of the island, or were aware “that they were undertaking a war of hardly less proportions than that against the Peloponnesians.” But one man at least in Athens had a true conception of the magnitude of the risk. This was Nicias, appointed to the command, we are told, “against his will.” Prudent and cautious—his opponents called him over-cautious—perhaps of a somewhat despondent temperament for an Athenian, but of sterling honesty of purpose and undoubted personal courage, he took upon himself to set before his countrymen the unpopular side of the question. In an Assembly summoned for the purpose of voting the necessary supplies for the expedition, he raised afresh the whole question of the expedition itself.

He begins by confessing that he knew the temper of his fellow citizens too well to entertain any hope of persuading them “not to risk the secure enjoyment of the present in grasping at a visionary future;” but he would try to show them that, in this case, at any rate, the risks were too grave. With so many subject-allies,

in Thrace and elsewhere, already wavering in their allegiance—with Sparta burning to revenge her late disaster—with an exchequer and a population greatly in need of recruiting,—they were going to take up the burden of a new and distant war. While they were leaving active enemies behind in Greece, they were going to tempt new ones to cross the sea against them. Even if they conquered Sicily, they could not retain it. Then he turns and makes a personal attack on Alcibiades, who probably was sitting close by, and who had been from the first one of the loudest advocates of the enterprise—an attack strangely bitter and vehement, when we consider they were to go out in joint command of the expeditionary forces : —

“If there be any one here who, elated at being appointed to a command, is urging you to set sail, looking to his own interest only,—especially as being somewhat young for such high office,—in the hope of winning admiration for his stud of horses and chariots, and of recouping himself somewhat for an extravagant expenditure out of the profits of his appointment, do not give him the opportunity of making a brilliant personal figure at the cost of national peril; but be assured that such men not only waste their own substance, but wrong the state; and that this business is a weighty one, and no fit matter for a youngster either to discuss in council or to be so hasty to take in hand. I have grave fears when I see those who sit there by his side and cheer his sentiments; and I appeal in my turn to the elder citizens among you, if any of you

chance to be sitting next to the men I mean, not to be shamed out of your opinion, nor fear to be thought cowards because you will not vote for war, nor be seized, like them, with a mad passion for far-off possibilities; remembering that the lust of ambition rarely achieves success, while a thoughtful policy commonly does.”—(VI. 12, 13.)

No wonder that Alcibiades, proud and impulsive, backed by the younger spirits of whom he was the admired leader, and confident that he carried the popular feeling with him in favour of the enterprise, turned round upon his older and more cautious colleague with a haughty and contemptuous frankness. He was young, he confessed: men called him extravagant in his expenditure. But youth had its place in the state as well as old age. The very magnificence of his late display at the Olympic games had tended to the honour not only of his ancestors and himself, but of his country:—

“Seven chariots did I enter—a number which no private individual ever reached before—and I won the crown, and was second and fourth besides, and entertained liberally in every way, as such a triumph deserved. To such things honour attaches, by common consent; but they also give an impression of power by their performance. So, again, whenever I make a gallant show in my office of *Choragus** at home, it

* Certain public offices at Athens—notably the furnishing the Chorus for the drama and equipping the war-galleys—were

may raise envy in my fellow-citizens, very naturally ; but in the eyes of foreigners this also implies strength. And this folly that they charge me with is not without its use, when a man by his private expenditure raises not himself only to distinction, but his country. Nor is it unfair that those who have high aspirations should hold themselves above the ordinary level, since the less fortunate find none who claim to stand on their level in their distress. If we are none of us courted in adversity, let us lay our account to be slighted by those in prosperity ; or else behave to all alike, and then claim the like treatment from others. I know, however, that men like myself, and all who outshine others in splendour of life, are objects of jealousy in their own day, to their equals especially, and also to the general public among whom they live. But none the less, they leave future generations eager to claim kindred with them, even where no such claim exists ; while their country makes its boast of them, as no aliens or misdoers, but as her own genuine children, and children who have done gallant deeds.” —(VI. 16.)

He scoffs at the idea of any effectual resistance on the part of the Sicilians —“ a mixed rabble, distracted by faction in every town, and eager for change.” He protests against refusing aid to an ally merely because he is distant and apparently unprofitable. Such never

discharged by the richest citizens at their own expense ; and they sometimes vied with each other in their liberal expenditure on such occasions.

had been — such never should be — the policy of Athens

Nicias made one more attempt to dissuade his countrymen from the enterprise, by representing to the Assembly the large scale on which preparations would have to be made. An overwhelming naval force, a strong body of heavy and light armed infantry, archers and slingers, plentiful supplies both of corn and of money, all must be provided as for those who would have to maintain themselves, from the first, in an enemy's country. If he was thought to be requiring too much, he would readily resign his command. The only reply was to bid him name his wants. A hundred three banked war galleys, 5000 heavy infantry, and light troops in proportion, were voted at once, and full powers given to the three generals who were to go out in command:—

“An eager longing for this expedition had fallen upon all alike. The elder thought they must surely conquer those against whom they were sailing, or that so large an armament could at least meet with no disaster. Those who were yet young were longing to see and explore a foreign country, and sanguine of coming home again safe. The mass of the people, and the soldiery, thought they should make money for the immediate present, and gain an accession of dominion which would supply a never-failing fund for pay. So that, owing to the intense eagerness of the majority, any man who did not regard the enterprise with favour held his peace, for fear lest, if he voted

against it, he should be reckoned disaffected to the state."—(VI. 24.)

So, at dawn on a midsummer day, the Athenians and their allies went on board their galleys in the harbour of the Piræus. It was the most splendidly equipped force, though not the largest, which ever went out of a Greek city. The captains had vied with each other in the liberality with which they armed and manned their galleys. It was the most distant expedition, too, which Athens had undertaken, and with the most ambitious hopes. The historian, concise and unimpassioned almost to a fault on most occasions, here warms into vivid description:—

“The whole population of the city, one might say, natives and sojourners alike, went down in a body to accompany them, the citizens escorting each their own immediate friends, —some their comrades, some their kinsmen, others their sons, —with mingled hopes and lamentations ; hopes of new acquisitions abroad, lamentations as for those they might never see again, remembering on what a long voyage from their native country they were setting forth ; and at this moment, when they were on the point of taking leave of each other with all the perils before them, the darker view was more present to them than when they had voted for the expedition. Yet nevertheless they took courage when they saw their actual strength, from the completeness of the force in every detail. The foreigners and the general crowd had come as to

a spectacle, to look upon an armament well worth seeing, and even surpassing belief.

“Now when the crews had embarked, and everything was got on board which they were to take with them, silence was proclaimed by sound of trumpet, and they offered the stated prayers before putting to sea, not separately ship by ship, but all together, at the leading of a herald; and they mixed bowls of wine throughout the whole force, officers and men pouring libations from gold and silver cups. And the whole multitude on shore joined in the prayers, both citizens and all who were present, and wished them good speed. And when they had sung their hymn to Apollo, and finished their libations, they cast off their moorings and sailed out in line at first, and then raced each with the other as far as Egina, and so made haste to reach Coreyra, where the rest of the allied forces were assembling.”—(VI. 30, 32.)

The Syracusans were for some time unwilling to believe the reports which reached them of the sailing of the expedition. At a general congress held to deliberate on the question, Hermocrates again put before his countrymen the imminence of the danger, and the necessity for union among themselves. He professed to have received accurate information of the Athenian movements, and had no doubt as to their real designs. They were coming, not to aid their allies, but to conquer Sicily. He advised that an appeal for aid should be made to the Greek towns

on the coast of Italy, to Lacedæmon, to Corinth, and even to Carthage, whose own interests might be in danger. Above all, let them man a fleet at once, meet the Athenians off Tarentum on their way, and dispute the passage of the Gulf.

This counsel was strongly opposed by Athenagoras, the leader of the democratical party—the Cleon of Syracuse. The Athenians would not come, he said; it was only a report spread by a faction for their own purposes, to raise themselves to power. If they did come, Syracuse would prove more than a match for them: he doubted whether they would even succeed in effecting a landing on the island. Syracuse stood much more in danger from oligarchs at home than from the Athenians.

News reached Syracuse at last that the armada, swelled by the junction of the allies to a hundred and thirty-four war-galleys, and accompanied by five hundred smaller craft, had actually reached the coast of Italy, and serious preparations were made for defence. The Athenians had already met with some discouragement. The colonists at Rhegium, on whose aid they had depended, had refused to join them; and it was found that the citizens of Segestè, who had offered to defray the expense of the expedition, were in no position to do so. The commanders of the force were divided in opinion. Nicias advised that they should confine their operations to Selinus, and then return. Alcibiades was for opening negotiations with all the towns except Selinus and Syracuse, and then, in conjunction with such native allies as they could

thus obtain, attacking Syracuse, unless it would agree to their terms. Lamachus, with a soldier-like directness which was in accordance with his general character, urged the bolder course of an immediate descent on Syracuse, while the alarm in the city was fresh, and before they had time to make preparation: a first successful blow, he said, would soon win them allies in the island.

The plan of Alcibiades was adopted; but he was not to do much himself towards carrying it out. A state galley had been sent out from Athens to carry him home as a prisoner, on a charge of sacrilege. It had been hanging over his head when the expedition sailed, and he had asked to be at once put upon his trial. But his enemies feared his popularity at the moment, and hoped to complete their evidence against him more easily in his absence. The little square stone pillars bearing the head of Hermes (Mercury), the genius of social and political life, which were set up in the street corners and other places in Athens, were discovered to have been all mutilated during one night. The excitement at Athens was profound. It was, says Grote, as though "all the images of the Virgin had been defaced during the same night in a Spanish or Italian town." Rewards were offered for the discovery of the perpetrators, and information was given by slaves of its having been a drunken frolic of certain young citizens of rank, of whom Alcibiades was said to have been the ringleader. He and his friends were also now accused of having held a mock celebration in private houses of the awful Eleusinian mysteries.

These acts were supposed to be in some way connected with a conspiracy against the democratic constitution, though it is not easy to understand how. Alcibiades was allowed to return to Athens in his own galley, to avoid the odium and possible danger of the public arrest of so popular an officer. He landed at Thurii on the way, gave his escort the slip, crossed in a boat to the Peloponnese, and went straight to Lacedæmon. Sentence of death was passed against him by default in the Assembly at Athens; but, in recalling him, they had taken the life out of the expedition; and they left the chief control of it in the hands of a commander who, however high his personal character, had from the first no sympathy with its objects, and no faith in its success.

Nicias and Lamachus now divided the fleet into two squadrons, and undertook some operations against a few of the coast-towns with indifferent success. The Syracusans grew bold, and determined on taking the offensive. Acting on information from a native who was really in the interest of the Athenians, they marched out in force to attack their position at Catana. The Athenians meanwhile re-embarked their forces, set sail by night, and, entering the Great Harbour of Syracuse, effected a landing close to the city itself, and fortified their position. They repulsed an attack made on them by the Syracusans, inflicting on them considerable loss. But the enemy was too strong in cavalry to allow them to push their advantage, and they withdrew to winter quarters in the harbours of Catana and Naxos, the only two settlements where

they had secured a favourable reception. The Syracusans employed the interval in strengthening the defences of their city; and both parties sought alliances both in the towns of Sicily and on the Italian coast. In one of these towns, Camarina, the Athenian envoy was met in the public assembly by Hermocrates, who had been sent there on the part of Syracuse. The latter urged his old argument, that this was not really the cause of Syracuse, but of all Sicily; if Syracuse were allowed to fall, it would be too late for any town in the island to resist the ambitious designs of Athens. The Athenian retorts the charge against Syracuse: he asserts that her object is to make use of others to repel the attack of Athens, only in order to make herself sovereign in the island when the Athenian fleet was gone; and he warns his hearers that the ambition of a neighbour at home was far more to be dreaded than that of a foreign state beyond sea.

The Syracusans sent embassies also to Corinth and to Sparta. At the latter place their appeal was supported by Alcibiades, now exasperated into bitterness against his own city and people. He is represented as making a clever speech there in apology for his new position; but Thucydides fails, as might be expected, to make out a good case for his renegade countryman. He makes Alcibiades endeavour to explain that a democrat at Athens meant one who was opposed to tyrants — whom the Spartans, oligarchical though their constitution was, held equally in abhorrence. Besides, he had been a democrat at Athens because the constitution was democratic; though, he says, “all we who

have any sense know what a democracy is, and no one better than myself, who could find it in my heart to abuse it heartily, only that nothing new can be said of a confessed absurdity." In fact, he protests he had been banished from Athens because he was not good democrat enough. The real aim of Athens in fitting out her armada (and he spoke, he said, as one who knew) was to subjugate Sicily first, then the Greek colonies on the coast of Italy, then Carthage, and then, with a gathered force from every quarter, Greek and barbarian, to attempt the conquest of the whole Peloponnese. He advised the Lacedæmonians by all means to send a body of their heavy infantry to Sicily, and above all, a Spartan general to organise the Syracusan forces; and at the same time to occupy Deceleia, a strong position fifteen miles from Athens, whence its communications and supplies could most readily be intercepted. He concludes as follows:—

"And I claim that none of you should think the worse of me because, after having seemed hitherto a lover of my country, I now act with all my energies against her in conjunction with her bitterest enemies, or distrust my suggestions as merely the zealous malice of a banished man. I am an exile—true: I have put myself beyond the power of their malice—not beyond the power of aiding you, if you will listen to me. And a man's worst enemies are not those who attack him in fair warfare, like you, but those who compel their friends to become their enemies. Loyalty I hold to be really due, not to the city which treats me with

injustice, but to that in which I once had my constitutional rights secured to me. Nor do I count that country now my fatherland which I am acting against; rather, I am preparing to reclaim a fatherland which is mine no longer. The true patriot is not he who shrinks from attacking his native land when he has been unjustly driven from it, but he who, out of his ardent longing for it, tries every means to regain it. I ask you, then, Lacedæmonians, to make use of me fearlessly, for whatever perilous service or hard work you will; remembering the argument so common in the mouths of all men, that if I have done you grievous harm as an enemy, I can surely do you important service as a friend.”—(VI. 92.)

The accession to the Lacedæmonian interests of the renegade Athenian was of great importance to the result of the struggle. His advice was at once followed. A Spartan officer, Gylippus, was straightway despatched to Syracuse to organise their army, with promise of ships and soldiers to follow in the spring. A fortress was built on Deceleia, and its effects upon Athens were harassing in the extreme. Its occupation by the enemy lasted until the termination of the war, and the people of Attica suffered all the evils of a perpetual invasion.

Early in the following summer the Athenians had got together a tolerably efficient cavalry force, mounted on native horses, which made them more a match for their enemies in that particular arm; and they commenced operations afresh against Syracuse. Their

fleet took up a position in the harbour of Thapsus, a small peninsula, which they fortified with a stockade. Above the city of Syracuse was a steep range of hill called Epipolæ (as "overhanging the town"), and of this it was necessary for the besiegers to get possession, in order to carry out their design of building lines of circumvallation—the usual process in a regular siege—while a strict blockade was to be maintained by sea. The Syracusans were well aware of the value of this position, and were taking measures to secure it, when the Athenians carried it by surprise, defeating the enemy, who hurried in disorder to defend it, with considerable loss. They began their investing works at once, drawing the line across from the Great Harbour to the smaller one at Trogilus. A cross wall, to cut this line, was commenced on the part of the enemy; it was destroyed by the Athenians: they began a second. In the course of these counter-operations, attacks were made upon the Athenian lines, and repulsed,—not without some loss on their side, however. In one of these engagements, Lamachus, hurrying to the support of the right wing of the Athenians, which had been driven in, got too far in advance, and was cut off with a few of his men, and killed. His body was carried off by the enemy, but restored after their defeat under the usual truce. It is disappointing to find the death of so gallant an officer related in the fewest and coldest words. The loss to the Athenians at this juncture of a commander whose voice in council had been given, as has been seen, in favour of a bolder course of action, must have been greater than

the historian shows. We know little of his character beyond the scanty notices in this history; but in the burlesques of Aristophanes he figures as the rough but honest soldier, of small means and homely manners, and a fair subject for a joke on those points, but the thorough "man of war from his youth," who braves all hardships, and is never so much at home as when in camp. Plutarch strongly confirms this view of his character.

The Athenians had now secured the slopes of Epipolæ, while their fleet held possession of the Great Harbour. The towns on the coast, and the native tribes in the interior, began to tender their allegiance to the successful invaders. The situation had become critical in the extreme for the Syracusans; and a party in the city had even opened communications with Nicias on the question of surrender. Nicias himself seems to have lost his old cautious and somewhat despondent temperament, and to have become confident and careless. He thought Syracuse lay at his feet.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DISASTER AT SYRACUSE.

It was about the month of August B.C. 414, when the actual siege of the city had been going on some five months, that Gylippus the Lacedæmonian arrived at Syracuse, with four galleys. After being delayed and wellnigh wrecked on his voyage, he had landed at the seaport of Himera, collected a force of native allies, and with them marched across country, and made his appearance on the heights of Epipolæ by some passes left unguarded in the rear of the Athenian position. He crossed their uncompleted line of circumvallation, and entered the city, escorted by the Syracusan army, who had come out to welcome him. By a negligence on the part of Nicias which seems unaccountable, no attempt appears to have been made to check either his march through the island or his entrance into the town.

It was only the news of his coming, which had reached Syracuse a few days before, that saved it from surrender. But from the moment of his arrival the confidence of the citizens was restored. It was not so much the relief which he brought or promised, as the

personal weight of the man, which gave them new spirit. He began by sending a herald to the Athenians to say that "he was prepared to make terms with them, if they were willing to quit Sicily within five days with all their belongings." We are not surprised to read that to such a proposal they vouchsafed no reply. But we imagine also its effect on the Syracusans, to whom the warlike reputation of the Spartans was well known. He next captured a fort which the Athenians had occupied, and put the garrison to the sword. But perhaps the point in his behaviour most calculated to instil respect and confidence in his new allies was, that when he was defeated in an action which took place between the works and counter-works, he had the courage to tell the Syracusans that "the fault was not theirs but his own, for having lost the advantage of the cavalry and javelin-men, by hampering himself too much between walls; but he would lead them to the attack again." They were Dorians, all of them, he said, and were not going to be beaten, surely, by these Ionians, and islanders, and mixed rabble of all sorts. And in the next battle he drove the Athenians within their lines, carried out the new counter-wall of defence beyond their works, and prevented them from ever completing their intended line of circumvallation.

Both sides stood in need of reinforcements. The Syracusans sent a further appeal for aid to Corinth and Lacedæmon; and Gylippus went in person through the towns of Sicily collecting such auxiliaries, naval and military, as he could. Nicias had fallen back

into his old despondency—indeed he had now perhaps sufficient cause—and he despatched a pitiable letter (which Thucydides probably gives *verbatim* from some public record) to the home authorities. The arrival of Gylippus, he said, had completely changed the situation. The Syracusans would soon be strongly reinforced. His army were obliged to give up their own works of circumvallation, and had become rather the besieged than the besiegers. Their ships were leaky, their crews daily diminishing—some even deserting. The expedition must either be recalled at once, or strongly reinforced. He himself was suffering from illness, and begged to be relieved of his command. There is much honest pathos, if some lack of dignity, in his personal appeal: “I think I have a right to claim this indulgence from you, for, so long as I had my health, I did you much good service in my command.”

Either the Athenians had immense confidence in the high character of their general, or they must have concluded that his letter expressed only the natural dejection of ill health, and unwillingness to incur responsibilities. They refused to supersede him; but they associated two of his officers with him in the command, until Demosthenes and Eurymedon, who were to be sent out as soon as possible with new forces, should arrive at Syracuse. The latter officer (of Corcyrean notoriety) was despatched at once, though it was the middle of winter, with ten galleys and a supply of money.

But the Syracusans received their reinforcements

first—a picked body of armed Helots from Lacedæmon, and infantry from Boeotia, Corinth, and Sicily. Gylippus, too, had returned to the city with what native auxiliaries he had been able to raise; and he now proceeded to adopt new and bolder tactics. All through the winter a Syracusan fleet had been carefully manned and regularly exercised; and he proposed at once to attack the Athenians where they had hitherto been supposed uncontestedly superior—by sea. In this he was ably seconded by Hermocrates, who maintained that this superiority rested on mere reputation, and, such as it was, had been but the result of circumstances which had compelled Athens to become a naval power instead of an inland one. The first attempt, however, resulted in a complete defeat of the new fleet in their attack on the Athenians in the Great Harbour; but in a simultaneous assault made by Gylippus by land upon the Athenian forts on Plemmyrium, he succeeded in driving them from that important position with considerable loss, and to their serious distress for the future, as it gave the Syracusans the command of the entrance of the harbour, and no supplies could now come in to the Athenians without a battle.

Nothing discouraged by their first defeat, the Syracusans prepared for a second trial of strength by sea. They knew that in the confined space within the harbour the usual Athenian tactics of sweeping round with their light and swift galleys and perfectly trained oarsmen, and ramming the enemy on the broadside, could not well be carried out; and, acting under the

advice of a clever Corinthian, they strengthened the beaks of their own heavier vessels with under-beams, so as to give them the advantage in a direct charge, bow to bow. The first day's engagement was indecisive; but the Syracusans renewed the action after a day's interval, and gained a complete victory, sinking seven Athenian galleys, disabling many more, and inflicting on them very considerable loss in men killed and prisoners. The spirits of the besieged were raised to the highest point: they were confident that they had now established their superiority at sea, and they had little doubt of the result of future operations by land. The discouragement of the besiegers was proportionate, and their fortunes from that time practically hopeless.

Yet for the moment their hopes revived, when, a day or two after the battle, Demosthenes and Eurymedon (who had returned to meet his fellow-admiral) arrived from Athens with the expected reinforcements. It was an imposing force which entered the harbour—almost a second armada—seventy-three war-galleys, five thousand heavy infantry, with light troops of various nationalities in full proportion. Even the Syracusans were struck with a new dismay at this addition to the strength of the enemy. And Demosthenes determined at least not to imitate “the policy of Nicias, whose force had been so formidable on his first arrival, but who had allowed it to fall into contempt by wasting the winter at Catana, instead of attacking Syracuse at once.”* He saw that the one

object, if the siege was to be carried to any successful issue, must be to capture and destroy the enemy's counter-work on Epipolæ. His attempts to take it by direct assault failed; and he then resolved upon a night attack in strong force by a circuitous route in its rear. The most difficult part of the enterprise had apparently succeeded: but then the troops seem to have lost their order and got into confusion: the battle-cries, where Greeks met Greeks, were not to be distinguished, and in the darkness and uproar friends were confounded with foes. The author honestly admits that he had been unable to gain from the actors on either side any clear account of the action: but in the end the Athenians were driven back down the hill. Many were forced over the cliffs, and many lost their way after the descent, and were cut off by the enemy's cavalry. The defeat was decisive, and thenceforth the Syracusans assumed the aggressive, and it became only a question of the Athenians holding their own.

A council of war was held, and Demosthenes urged a retreat while their fleet were yet masters of the seas; and in this he was supported by Eurymedon. Nicias opposed it; he was afraid of dispiriting his men; and he thought he had friends in the city who would yet arrange for its surrender. He did not urge these reasons publicly in the council. He argued that the Athenians would never forgive a retreat without orders from home. "He had no wish himself, knowing well, as he did, the temper of the Athenians, to die an unjust death at the hands of his countrymen on a charge of dishonour: he preferred to risk his fate, if so it

must be, at the hands of the enemy, so far as he was concerned." * The resources of Syracuse, he was assured from private information, were all but exhausted; and he maintained that they must carry on the siege.

In divided counsels there is no safety. Demosthenes and Eurymedon unwillingly gave way; the Syracusans received reinforcements both from the island and from the Peloponnese; and then, too late, Nicias ceased to oppose a general retreat. Secret orders were issued for the departure of the fleet; but an eclipse of the moon intervened, and Nicias — "for he was much given to superstitious scruples and such-like — declared that he would not now even discuss the question as to making any movement before they had waited thrice nine days, as the soothsayers enjoined."

The Syracusans had gained intelligence of the contemplated retreat, and at once made a combined attack on their enemies by land and sea. Their first attempt to storm the Athenian lines was not successful; but they completely defeated the Athenian fleet in the harbour, capturing eighteen of their galleys and killing all their crews. Eurymedon was among the slain. They were resolved to complete the destruction of their whole armament. With this view, they began to block up the mouth of the harbour with a close packed line of merchant vessels, while they prepared for another attack on the fleet within. The only hope for the Athenians now was to force the passage. Nicias addressed his crews, and again the captains individually, reminding them that not only their own lives,

but the fortunes of Athens, hung on the coming battle. Gylippus, on his part, called on the Syracusans to fight now, not only for the liberties of Sicily, but for vengeance on the invader.

Nicias gave the command of the fleet to Demosthenes, himself remaining at the head of the troops on shore. The fight in the harbour was long and obstinate. There were nearly two hundred galleys engaged in close action, and above half of them were left mere wrecks; but the result was another decisive victory for the Syracusans. The Athenians had provided grappling-irons, by means of which they laid their own galleys aboard the enemy's, and reduced the struggle to a combat hand-to-hand. But it may well be doubted whether this was not in their enemy's favour, as they would thus lose all the advantage of their own nautical skill. The historian has given a description of the battle at greater length and with more picturesque detail than is usual with him. The struggle took place in full view of the troops on both sides, who lined the shores of the harbour, and their interest in it is vividly described. It is possible that the writer was himself a spectator:—

“The troops on either side who looked on from shore, while the sea fight was thus equally balanced, shared largely, so far as their feelings were concerned, in the struggle and the conflict; the native forces eager now for increase of glory, the invaders dreading lest they should meet with a worse disaster than they had already. . . . When any of them saw their own

men victorious in any quarter, they were of good cheer, and fell to invoking heaven not to disappoint them of success ; while those who beheld their friends getting the worst of it mingled their shouts with lamentations, and, because they could see all that happened, were more depressed in spirit than those actually engaged. Others, who had a view of some hardly-contested scene of the fight, went through the greatest distress, owing to the prolonged suspense of the struggle, and in their extreme anxiety made contortions of their bodies corresponding to their feelings,—for they were always within a little, as it seemed, either of escape or destruction. So, in that one and the same body of Athenians, so long as the fight at sea was equally balanced, might be heard all at once loud lamentations and shouts of triumph—‘They are winning!’ ‘They are beaten!’—and all the varied utterances which would be forced from a great army under great peril.”—(VII. 71.)

So utterly overwhelmed and demoralised were the Athenians by this last defeat, that they had thought of retreating by night, without even asking the usual permission to bury their dead. Demosthenes, indeed, would have made one more attempt to force the passage out next morning with the remaining ships ; but the men would not hear of it.

They began their retreat by land, 40,000 men who were in a condition to march ; leaving their dead, their sick, and their wounded behind, burning such of their galleys as they could, and abandoning the remainder to the Syracusans. “The account of the

retreat," says Macaulay, "is among narratives what Vandyck's Lord Strafford is among paintings."

"A terrible scene it was, not only from the one great fact that they were going off with the sacrifice of all their ships, and, instead of all their high hopes, in imminent peril for themselves and for their country; but in the act of breaking up their quarters there occurred circumstances grievous alike to their sight and their feelings individually. For they were leaving their dead unburied, and when any man saw one of his personal friends lying among them, he was seized at once with grief and with dread: while those who were being left behind alive, wounded or sick, were a far sadder sight than even the dead for the living to look upon, and more to be pitied than those who had been slain. For these, breaking out into entreaties and lamentations, drove their friends almost to distraction by conjuring them to take them with them; appealing to each one by name, if they caught sight of a friend or a relative, hanging on their mess comrades as they were moving off, and following them as far as they could; and when their strength or their limbs failed, not resigning themselves to being left behind without repeated adjurations and many groans. So that the whole force, reduced to weeping and in this sore distraction, had much work to get away at all, though they were quitting an enemy's country, after sufferings too great for tears, and in dread of suffering yet more in the unseen future. Great, too, was the general dejection and lack of confidence in themselves; for they

resembled nothing so much as the population of a city that has been starved out and has to be evacuated. . . . It was the heaviest reverse that had ever happened to a Greek army: it had fallen to men who came to make slaves of others to have to retreat for fear lest such lot should rather be their own. Instead of the prayers and hymns of triumph with which they had set sail, they had now to leave their quarters under omens the very reverse, moving by land instead of by sea, and having to trust to their arms and not their ships. Yet still, in view of the magnitude of the peril which yet hung over them, all this seemed to them endurable enough.”—(VII. 75.)

Nicias made his last address to his broken force, as he passed along their lines, in a firm voice, and as cheerfully as he might. He bade them hope still, and, above all things, not lose their self-respect.

“For my own part—there is no one of you who is not at least as strong as I am (you can see to what a state I am reduced by disease), and though I have as much to make life valuable to me, privately and publicly, as any man, yet here I am, exposed to the same danger as the meanest soldier: yet I have done much to live a god-fearing life, and to act justly and be without reproach among men. And therefore have I yet confident hope for the future, and these misfortunes do not appal me so much as they well might. . . . Look, too, what stout soldiers, and in what goodly numbers, march in your ranks, and be not too much

disheartened : remember that wherever you take up your quarters, you will virtually form a city of yourselves, and that there is no place in Sicily that can either withstand your attack, or drive you out if once you occupy it. Take only good heed yourselves that your march be safe and orderly, each man reflecting that in the spot for which he may be forced to fight, he will find, if he is victorious, both a city and a fortress. . . .

“ In brief, fellow soldiers, make up your minds that you must needs put forth all your valour, since there is no refuge at hand to which you can escape if you turn cowards ; while, if you now deliver yourselves from your enemies, all will regain the homes I know you long to see, and we Athenians shall build up again the mighty power of our native state, fallen though it may be now ; for it is men that make a state, and not stone walls or empty galleys.” (VII. 77.)

The retreating army marched in a kind of hollow square, the camp followers and baggage inside, harassed at every step by the enemy's horse, and galled by their archers. The first day they did not make five miles. The Syracusans had occupied beforehand the fords and passes. The Athenians gained some little ground by a stolen march the second night ; but by the next mid-day the rear-guard under Demosthenes found themselves surrounded in an olive plantation, and laid down their arms on the promise that their lives should be spared. Nicias, with the advance, struggled on some

distance further, till they reached the little river Asinarius. There, rushing into the stream to quench their burning thirst, they fell into irretrievable confusion, and were butchered by thousands with scarcely an attempt at resistance. Nicias at length surrendered to Gylippus in person. Of the troops, some few made their escape and reached the friendly walls of Catana; some were carried off and made slaves by their individual captors; 7000 were carried to Syracuse as public spoil, and after a miserable imprisonment of about two months in the great stone quarries there, exposed without shelter of any kind to burning sun and heavy rains, were sold as slaves: the Athenians and Sicilian Greeks were kept there some time longer.

The fate of the two commanders was a subject of some discussion. Gylippus would have carried them home with him in triumph to Lacedæmon. But the Syracusans would not even show this questionable mercy: they insisted on putting both to death. Thucydides thinks that the influential parties within the walls, who had been in communication with Nicias, feared that he might betray their secrets. The historian gives him a brief and cold epitaph. "He least of all the Greeks of my time deserved such a miserable fate, because of his consistent practice of every recognised moral virtue."* Yet it was better for him, per-

* There is another reading of the passage,—"consistent discharge of all religious duties;" on which Mr Grote has founded a sneering depreciation of Nicias as "such a respectable and religious man!"—(Hist. of Greece, V. 308.)

haps, than a return to Athens with the broken remains of that grand armament, to the failure of which his own incompetence had so largely contributed.

Great was the consternation at Athens, when by slow degrees the whole terrible truth began to be realised. They knew the full extent of their danger. The Syracusans might sail to the Phœnix; their enemies at home would gather courage; the subject-islanders would seize the opportunity to revolt. But they no more lost heart than the Romans after Cannæ. They built a new fleet, and retrenched their expenses. The reserve of a thousand talents (some £240,000), which the foresight of Pericles had set aside at the commencement of the war for any season of emergency, was now called into use. But though Athens rallied thus gallantly, and maintained the struggle with varying success for eight years longer, she never fully recovered the blow which had been struck in Sicily. She had found her Moscow, says Thirlwall, in Syracuse.

And here, if completeness were desired, the history of Thucydides should conclude. The events chronicled in his eighth and last "book" (which he never finished) are of inferior interest to the Sicilian disaster, and were only preparatory to the end. The anticipated revolt amongst the subject allies of Athens soon began. The important island of Chios was the first to throw off its allegiance, supported by a Peloponnesian fleet; the Ionian town of Miletus followed, and the islands of Teos, Lesbos, Rhodes, and later on, Eubœa. An alliance was concluded for the first time between the Lacedæmonians and the court of Persia, from which,

however, they reaped no material benefit ; for the king had his own interests chiefly in view, and Tissaphernes, the satrap who managed Persian affairs in those quarters, speedily disagreed with his new friends.

The intrigues of Alcibiades, restless in his exile, mistrusted by the Spartans in spite of all his ability, contributed largely to the quarrel. He was endeavouring to bring about his own restoration to Athens under a change of government. "He had taken measures," says Thucydides, "through some powerful friends, to have it mentioned in good society that he should be glad to come back - but under an oligarchy, not under the rascal democracy who had driven him out - and to resume his position as a citizen, after giving them Tissaphernes for a friend." The plot was first concocted in the Athenian camp at Samos, and the temptation of making an ally of the Great King, who could have no possible dealings with a democracy, and whose pecuniary aid would be so valuable, proved strong enough, combined with the influence of the oligarchical clubs, to effect a revolution at Athens. The old democratic constitution—it had existed, the author remarks, a hundred years exactly—was overthrown, and an oligarchy of Four Hundred seized the government. Among the leaders of this movement was Antiphon the rhetorician, said to have been Thucydides's teacher. But it was not by this party, after all, that Alcibiades was recalled. They found that he did not possess the influence of which he had boasted with the Persians; and they suspected, not unjustly, that he was at heart no true partisan of any cause but his own private in-

terests. The army and the fleet had continued staunch to the cause of democracy, and sworn at Samos a solemn oath to maintain it. Generals were elected by public vote, in whom they could have full confidence. "We must not lose heart," said one of them, Thrasylbulus, "because the city has revolted from us." But the strangest circumstance was, that Alcibiades gave in his adhesion to them, and was taken into their confidence. He was restored to his country by the formal vote of a self-constituted Assembly held by the troops at Samos; for they regarded Athens, under her new oligarchical rulers, as no longer the seat of any lawful authority. Within a few months the government of the Four Hundred was overthrown there, and the democracy in all essentials restored. Antiphon and others of his fellow-revolutionists were brought to trial, and condemned, in accordance with the Athenian law of treason, to drink the hemlock juice. A Lacedæmonian fleet with which, as Thucydides admits, Antiphon and his party had held treasonable communications, was hovering off the Peloponnese; and had they known how to use their opportunity, the fall of Athens might have taken place six years earlier than it did.

Restored to all his rights, Alcibiades was at once elected one of the Athenian generals. He did not revisit his native city for some years; but under his leading, and that of Thrasylbulus and Thrasylus, the Athenian fleet won a victory at Kynos-sema on the Hellepont, over the Peloponnesian confederates, including a squadron from their old enemy Syracuse

(B.C. 411). It was a success not so decisive or important in itself, as in the effect it had for the time on the drooping spirit of Athens. With this event, in the twenty-first year of the war, the author's unfinished history concludes.

More than once before the war was ended, Athens had her gleams of triumph and her chances of at least an honourable peace. When the Lacedæmonian admiral, Mindarus, was killed, and his whole fleet captured, in the fight at Cyzicus, negotiations were proposed by the enemy, and in the flush of triumph refused. Overtures are said to have been again made by Lacedæmon after the second great naval victory of the Athenians at the Arginusæ islands, and to have been in like manner rejected. But the tide of success soon turned. Athens dismissed from his command, and drove again into exile, the man whom, with all his faults, she could least spare at this juncture Alcibiades. He had not always been successful: he had still bitter personal enemies, and his relations with the Persian satraps were a continued ground of suspicion. She adjudged to death, for what was at worst but an error of judgment, the commanders who had conquered for her at Arginusæ; and she was worse served by those who (in spite of the generous warning of the exiled Alcibiades against the insecurity of the station) lost her navy in the crowning disaster at the Goats' River (*Aigos potami*). She had to surrender to

Lysander on almost his own terms: and while her bitterest enemies looked on, crowned with garlands as at a holiday, her Long Walls, her pride and defence, were pulled down to the sound of the Lacedæmonian fife. It was only the forbearance of her great rival that prevented her utter obliteration, as a power in Greece.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

CLOSELY as Thucydides may be said to have approached to the spirit of modern history, there are points where the difference strikes the reader forcibly enough. He scarcely ever vouchsafes us even a glimpse of the Athens or Sparta of his day, except so far as their foreign politics are concerned—that is, their relations with each other and the neighbouring states in the way of treaties and alliances, in operations by land and sea, in the struggle for dominion and the resistance it entails. We see nothing of the great Pericles except as the leading spirit of the war,—the commander of the Athenian forces, or the orator who defends its policy. Of the internal state of Athens we gain from his history no information at all. The description of the great pestilence might be taken as an exception, but that he plainly regards it chiefly as an important episode in the war. We should have known nothing from his pages of the influence over the Athenian commons of men like Cleon, if the capture of Splakteria and the fate of the Mityleneans had not brought this influence into the foreground.

Yet perhaps even what we are inclined to notice as

a defect may be the consistency of it, which is not unfrequently too cold and severe for popular criticism. Thucydides set out by professing himself the historian of the war between the confederacies of Athens and Sparta, and he has confined himself to his subject with a unity of purpose, and perhaps some amount of self-denial, which has not always been appreciated. It is true that we learn from him nothing of the social and domestic life of his countrymen at a most interesting period: we gain more real information on this point from the burlesques of Aristophanes or the Dialogues of Plato. On the art, the science, the literature of the times, he is absolutely silent. He has no "supplementary chapters" on these subjects, like his modern successors, in which the progress and development of a nation in these respects is kept on parallel lines, as it were, with its growth or decadence in strength, in territory, in the achievements of war. The only poet he quotes is Homer, and then rather as historian than as bard; we should not know from his pages that the drama, then in its highest development, was a main feature in Athenian life: he mentions the noblest work of Pheidias—the statue of Athene in the Parthenon—only to calculate the amount of gold on it which Pericles thought might be available in a national emergency.* Much as we may regret these omissions, the historian would perhaps have defended them, as being outside the subject he had proposed to himself and to his readers: he had promised us not a history of Athens, but a history of the war.

The same explanation may not unfairly be suggested

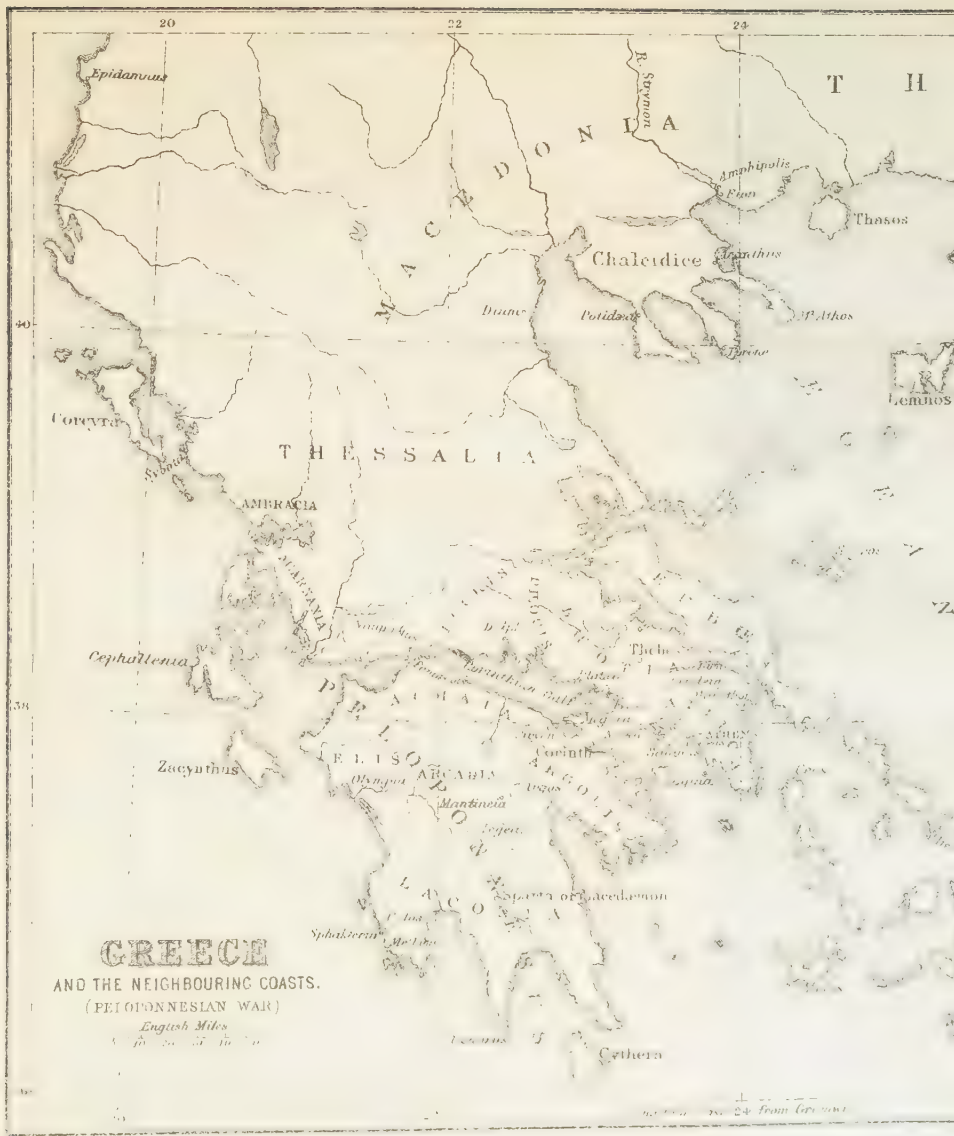
* II. 13.

of a charge which has been brought against him of an apparent indifference to human suffering. The cold-blooded massacres perpetrated by both parties in this war are related by him without any attempt at palliation, and at the same time without any expression of horror. Even the sufferings of the Athenian citizens after the great disaster in Sicily do not affect the calm current of his narrative: and he leaves the wretched captives in the Syracusan stone-quarries without even satisfying the reader whether the majority of them perished there or not. But such was the merciless character of warfare even amongst the highly civilised Greeks: and his is a military history, and not a moral discourse.

Another characteristic feature in which the work of Thucydides presents a remarkable contrast to the style of modern historians has already been partly noticed. The long and elaborate speeches which he introduces from time to time form almost a distinct literary production. They do not rise from the narrative, but are fitted into it. So involved and difficult in their language and construction that Cicero pronounced them wellnigh unintelligible, they often serve rather as obstructions in the reader's course than as aids to his realisation of the story. The young student of Thucydides is sometimes recommended to pass them over in his first reading, and confine himself to the actual history. But they serve, no doubt, a definite purpose of their own. They are essays on the political questions of the times; they give the author's view of the motives which actuated the leaders of the several states engaged in the great war. They form, in fact, the philosophy

of the history is distinct from the facts. They may have represented here and there the substance of the argument—in some few cases even of the language—actually used by the speakers named; they reflect sometimes—notably in the case of Cleon and Diodotus—the divided voice of public opinion; but we are more certain to find in them the view in which the great question of the hour presented itself to the historian himself. Whether the speaker be Athenian, Corinthian, or Syracusan, the voice and language are still those of Thucydides. A remarkable language it is; reminding us now of the involved periods of St Paul, and now of the speeches of Cromwell, in which the expression vainly struggles with the thought. The style is evidently moulded on that of the professional rhetoricians to whom the Athenians loved to listen; and the author addresses himself to both sides of the argument with all the ability of a practised advocate. If it had not been that the interest of a great war called forth his powers as a historian, Thucydides might have filled the chair of his teacher Antiphon, instead of recording his fate.

END OF THUCYDIDES.



GREECE

AND THE NEIGHBOURING COASTS.

(PELOPONNESIAN WAR)

English Miles

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Scale of Miles 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

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